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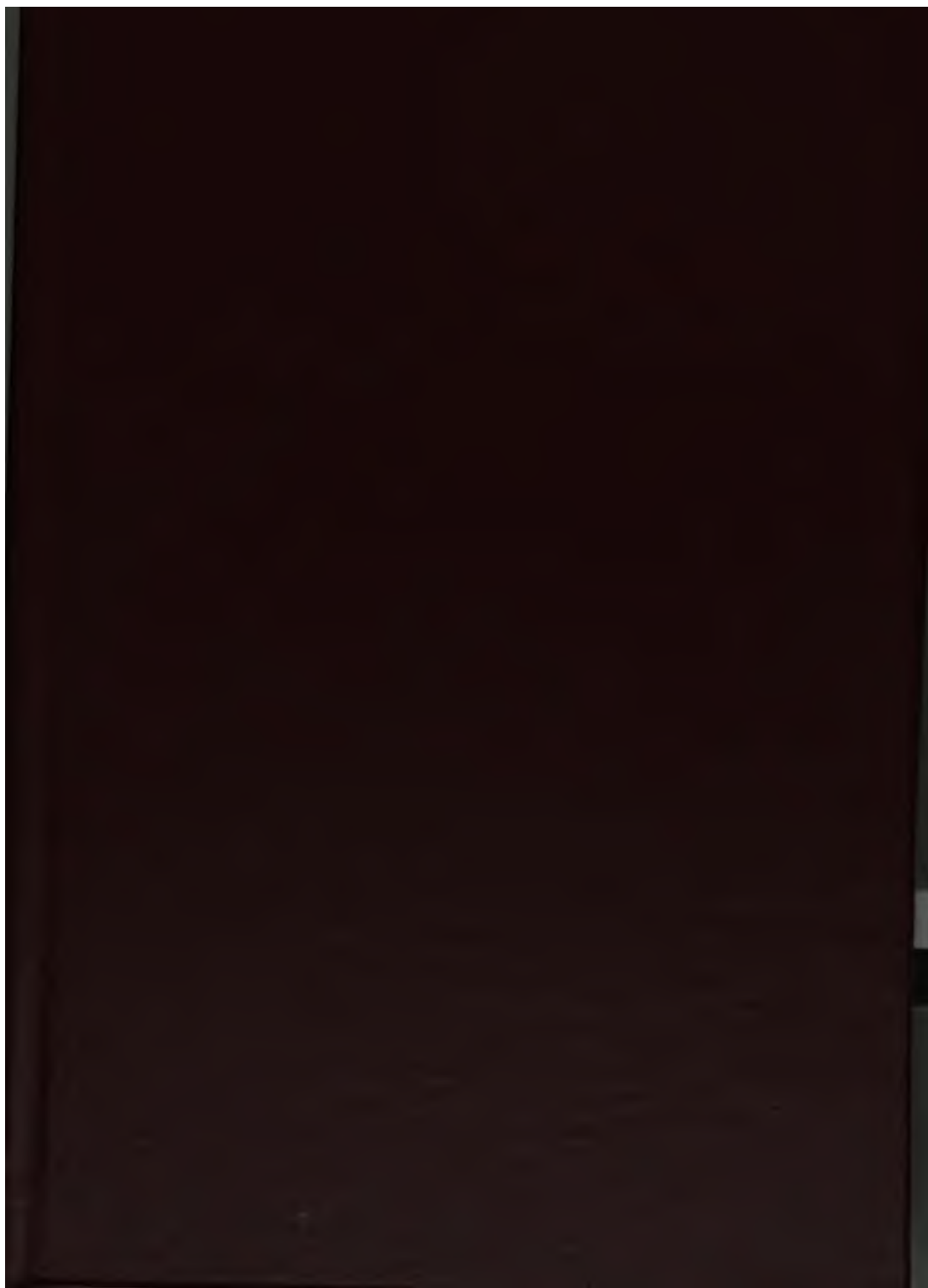
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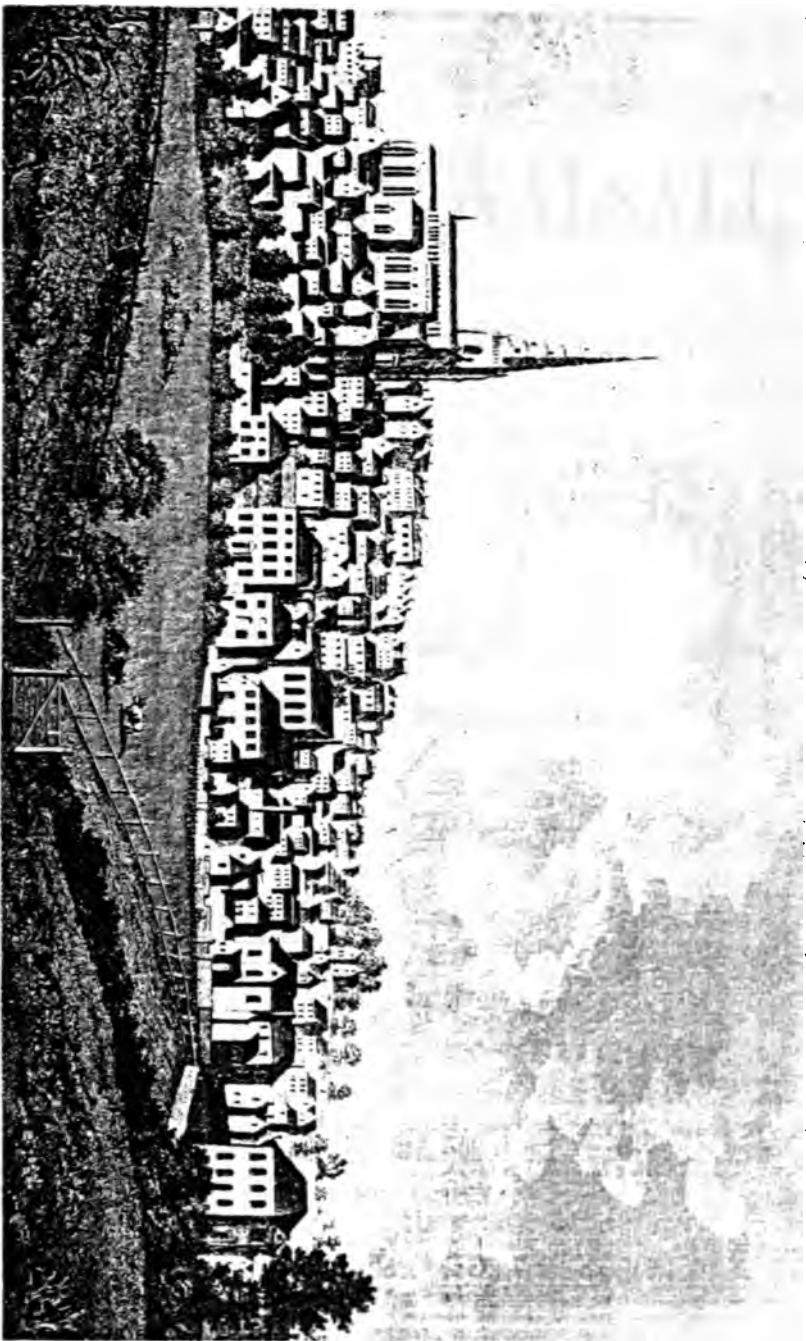






"To elucidate Local History, in the manner in which it ought to be elucidated, is to rescue the worthy from oblivion; to delineate the changes of manners and the progress of arts; to call back to the fancy the pomp and splendour of ages that are gone; to restore the ruined castle; to re-people the deserted mansion, and bid, for a moment, the grave render back its inhabitants to the fond eye of regret."

*Censura Literaria*, vol. i. p. 50.



VIEW OF WALSALL in 1795.  
*from a drawing by Shaw.*



*Bind flat*

©

A

# HISTORY OF WALSALL

And its Neighbourhood:

BY

FREDERIC W. WILLMORE / M.R.C.S., ENG.,

Member of the William Salt Archaeological Society.

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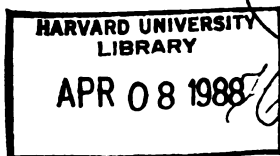
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TO THE  
BURGESSES OF WALSALL  
I DEDICATE  
THESE MEMORIALS  
OF THEIR  
ANCIENT BOROUGH.



## Preface.

**I**T is with feelings of regret and reluctance that I offer this "*History of Walsall*" to my fellow townsmen. Regret in relinquishing a task which has pleasantly occupied short and scattered intervals of leisure for several years past, and reluctance because I conceive that others with more capability and time at their disposal, would have accomplished the work more worthily and completely. For let it be at once acknowledged that there is still much to be done, and the future historian of the town will find a wide field remaining for minute examination, and ground yet untrodden, capable of yielding fresh facts and materials for study.

A work of this kind may indeed well occupy a lifetime, for records of the past are constantly turning up from many a secret source, leading to new inferences, and not infrequently to the detection of error in old legends, or the destruction of antique traditions.

In some respects the history of Walsall may be regarded as, at first sight, deficient in interest. It boasts no ruined castle, whose crumbling walls might appeal to the imagination or to the sympathy of the student; no antique manor-house, with noble owner and ancestral race, who have taken a warm interest in the old town and its fortunes; no rich cathedral, to testify



*by its monuments, traditions, and massive glory, to the splendour of a byegone past. Nor is Walsall directly connected with any of those great events, which have from time to time stirred the current of British history; whilst the men of mark which it has produced have not come prominently before the notice of the world. The history of the town is less ambitious, but by no means less deserving of minute attention, abounding as it does in quiet incident and in numerous facts of extreme interest and import to every true hearted native. Important events have, however, taken place in and around it. Its burgesses have fought bravely for their rights, while its sons have fought bravely for their king, and, impartial truth must also confess, sometimes against him. Its manorial rights have been tossed about from king to equerry, from duke to earl, from lord to lady; while its church revenues have been appropriated by the avarice of monks in a distant town, with the approbation and assent of the cathedral dignitaries at Lichfield. Its internal history, both civil and domestic, from a period extending as far back as the reign of King John, is illustrated by the noble collection of documents belonging to the Corporation, by the Cottonian MS. in the British Museum, now in course of translation by Mr. Gillespie, by various deeds in the Public Record Office and other State Papers, and by the treasures of the Salt Library, at Stafford, all of which contribute to give us an intelligible, if disjointed, picture of the town during many centuries.*

*Hitherto, little has been done to sift and piece together this history, and it would be idle to deny that much time and patient research are needed before the materials can be thoroughly exhausted and correctly interpreted.*

*In the latter part of the last century, a native antiquary named Gee contributed to the "Gentlemen's Magazine" two letters on the old church of St. Matthew, and they possess interest as being the first distinctive writings on local matters that we have left to us. Of this gentleman Shaw speaks in the following terms: "Of the town and parish of Walsall (besides what I collected from an old chartulary in the British Museum) I am indebted for a full account to a self-taught genius, Mr. James Gee."*

*In 1798 appeared Shaw's account of the manor, in his great work on the county of Stafford. This account has justly formed the basis of nearly all that has been written since on the subject, but it is naturally incomplete, for he was not allowed by the civic authorities of that day to examine the valuable papers in the Town Chest, while the vast collection of national deeds, scattered throughout the kingdom, were then practically inaccessible. To the Mayor and Corporation Shaw specially expresses his thanks for "the handsome plate of the town," a reproduction of which may be seen in this work.*

*In 1813 the description of Shaw, a directory of inhabitants, a copy, gravely incorrect, of the great charter of incorporation, together with several miscellaneous articles, were published in one volume, by Thomas Pearce, of Hill Street, who held the office of Constable for the Borough. The book is valuable as a view of the town at that time, but it contributed no fresh matter, nor did it display any independent study.*

*About 1830 a Mr. Charasse, of High Street, brought out a small local history, and in 1855 appeared the work of Mr. Glew, which contains a valuable account of the charities of the town. This volume contains many loose, and some wholly inaccurate statements, and is more*

*of a gossiping guide to the town than a succinct and clear history.*

*The "Walsall Note Book" (1830), the "Walsall Observer" (1862), the "Midland Magazine" (1880), and the Walsall papers, all contain detached fragments of local history.*

*Among antiquarians who have contributed largely to these and other papers, and to whom I desire here to express my greatest obligations, are Mr. A. D. Aulton, Mr. W. C. Owen, and Mr. W. H. Duignan. To the wide knowledge and lore for local lore of my friend Mr. Duignan, I am especially indebted, and feel that no words can sufficiently acknowledge the value of his kindly help and numerous suggestions. To those many friends who have assisted me by the help of books, and by the loan of maps, plans, &c., I also return my warmest thanks. Of these I may expressly mention the Free Library Committee, who have allowed their Plan of the Town to be reproduced; Mr. J. Penderel Brodhurst, who has given me substantial help in the pedigree of Humphrey Penderel; the Hon. E. S. Parker-Jervis, who gave me access to his notes on the Hawe family; Messrs. Marlow & Potter; the Town Clerk: Mr. J. R. Cooper; Mr. Mazzinghi of Stafford; and lastly to my Printer and Publisher, Mr. W. H. Robinson, for the unceasing care and labour he has bestowed on the production of the work whilst passing through the press.*

*The labour of correcting the proof sheets was undertaken in a most generous manner by Mr. R. W. Gillespie, who, with his rich and widespread stores of knowledge, ripe judgment, and intimate acquaintance with the obsolete handwriting and phraseology of many of the old Town Records, has rendered me invaluable help.*

*One word, in conclusion, as to the method and arrangement of the book, which has been here adopted. There are many ways of writing a local history, but each has to be determined, more or less, according to the special facts which that history contains. I have chosen that which appears to me to present, in the clearest and simplest form, the various elements of our history, free from all superfluous elaboration, and from all matter which does not bear in a direct manner on the subject itself, and thus serve to elucidate it. I have also found it desirable, and even necessary, to incorporate in this work some of those events which have occurred in the adjacent parishes, and which have in many, if not all instances, a bearing on the history as a whole.*

*And now, imperfect as such an undertaking must ever be, I give the book forth to the public, in the hope that it will diffuse some little of that interest which its pages have given to me, and that it may help to hand down to others the plain unvarnished truths belonging to this our ancient town.*

*F. W. WILLMORE.*

WALSALL,  
SEPTEMBER, 1887.

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# A HISTORY OF WALSALL.





## INTRODUCTION.

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WITHOUT venturing to claim too high a prominence for Walsall and its vicinity as illustrative of a buried past, it may yet be safely affirmed that its ancient, mediæval, as well as more modern history, contains much that is of deep value and interest to the student, as well as to those who, by birth or by accidental circumstances, have grown up in homely association with the old town and its surroundings.

The rapid changes now taking place are removing one by one each aged landmark, and soon of old Walsall, with its quaint and narrow streets and their antique houses, will be left scarce one stone upon another.

Before, however, entering minutely into the various phases of its history, we may well glance briefly at some of the salient features of the place itself and those of the neighbouring country.

The church hill is the ancient centre of the town, and the observer standing upon it will view a scene forming abundant scope for reflection and pleasure. On a clear day his eye will range over a wide prospect. To the south, west, and northwards, from his feet to Birmingham, Dudley, Wolverhampton, and

Bloxwich, far almost as sight can reach, lies a black and chimney-laden land; in the descriptive words of Washington Irving, "a region of fire reeking with coal pits and furnaces and smelting houses, vomiting forth flames and smoke." Where, a century ago, the green grass grew and noble woods interspersed here and there with a few scattered hamlets and village spires, now lives and breathes a mighty population, struggling with the ever-increasing difficulty of finding adequate means of subsistence.

To the east alone does the view allure the wondering mind to quieter dreams, lighting as it does on pleasanter features. Here the eye wanders over a fair expanse of country still retaining much of its primitive beauty, from the midst of which rises the solitary clump of trees on Barr Beacon, from whence in olden times the signal was flashed to "Malvern's lonely height." Where once the wild wolf wandered and the painted Briton stole with stealthy step; where Druidism held its barbarous sway and the flames of its midnight sacrifices lit up the horizon around; where the Roman legions marched with silent step and determined purpose, against their dusky foes; where, centuries later, the Saxon Kings hunted the wolf, the wild boar and the deer, there still remain green fields, dark bordered with varied woodland, a scene on which fancy may long linger with pleasurable emotions.

Above, tower the Gothic pinnacles and tall spire of the Parish Church of St. Matthew, a prominent object from afar, indicating the position of the town for many miles around.

On this elevated site in all probability both Briton and Saxon worshipped their several deities, while, at another time, it was entrenched for defensive purposes.

By degrees arose a stately church, adorned with monuments and painted windows; with rich chantries and numerous charities, and a solemn train of monks and chaplains and choristers, giving to the whole almost a cathedral dignity and importance.

Around and beneath the foot of the spectator lie grouped the houses and streets of the town; the old part reached almost by a stone's throw, the newer outspreading on either side far and wide. He may note the narrow ancient streets, Hill Street, Church Street, Rushall Street, and the steep and spacious descent of the High Street, down which the earlier coaches ran. Farther off lies the crescentic outline of the newer Ablewell or Avalwall Street, which allowed of an easier access to the town, and avoided the dangers of the steep and tortuous thoroughfares so long the main arteries for traffic.

From the churchyard may be seen in the distance the chimneys of Bentley Hall, rendered memorable for the concealment, within its walls, of the wandering monarch Charles II.

The ancient castle of Rushall, once the ancestral seat of the Bowles, the Harpurs and the Leighs, recalling Basil Earl of Denbigh, his Ironsides and the tumult of the great Civil war, lies in full view to the north; while to the south, screened only by the houses, is the antique mansion of the Hawe family, where Queen Henrietta Maria is reputed to have

stayed, when passing through the town in 1643, on her way from Newark to meet the king at Edgehill.

A final view will discover Bescot, the moated hall of the once knightly family of Hillari, beyond which lie several of the "Black Country" towns.

On the horizon may be seen Dudley, with its "castle in the woods," the towers of Wolverhampton and Bloxwich churches, and to the north the still uncultivated wilds of Cannock Chase, formerly one of the most extensive in the kingdom, and the ancient limits of which once extended to within a few hundred yards of our point of observation.

Nor must it be forgotten, that the old Grammar School once stood upon the southern part of the church hill, shaded by lofty trees, neath which, in bygone years, Bishop Hough and the great Lord Somers may have conned their daily tasks.

While, therefore, there is in the history of Walsall much that may be deemed dull and uneventful, yet we shall find her connected with the past by many a notable circumstance, and if she be deficient in matter of startling incident and historical importance, there still remain many bypaths, which afford pleasurable instruction, and impart to herself and her surroundings a deep and lasting interest.

# A HISTORY OF WALSALL.

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## GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

Walsall is an ancient borough and town corporate, situated on the south-eastern border of the county of Stafford, and in the southern division of the Hundred of Offlow.

It lies nearly in the centre of England, its exact geographical position being 52°35' N. of latitude, and 1°58' W. of longitude. It is distant 119 miles N.W. from London; 87 S.E. from Liverpool; 8 miles N.W. from Birmingham; 9 miles S.W. from Lichfield; and 6 miles E. from Wolverhampton. It is in the Diocese of Lichfield and the Archdeaconry of Stafford, while it gives name to a Rural Deanery, a Poor Law Union and a County Court and Polling District in the Southern Parliamentary Division of Staffordshire.

By the Reform Bill of 1832 it acquired the privilege of sending one member to the House of Commons. From a comparatively small and old-fashioned market town, it has during the present century developed with great rapidity, until now, both in point of population and by its importance as a large manufacturing centre, it takes rank as the second town in the county.

The parish of Walsall is divided into two townships, called respectively the Borough and the Foreign, which cover together an area of about 8,000 acres. The former contains about 100 acres,

Digest of Eng-  
lish Census,  
1881.

with a population, according to the census of 1881, of 7,652; the latter contains 7,782 acres, and comprises Bescot, Bloxwich, Birchills, Walsall Wood, Shelfield, Goscote, and Caldmore, with a population of 47,559. A small portion of the parish of Rushall was added to the Municipal Borough of Walsall in 1876, with a population of 3,584. This brings up the total of the Municipal Borough to 58,795 persons.

Walsall Red  
Book, 1884.

In its greatest length the parish measures  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles. Its rateable value in 1883 amounted to £154,045 8s. 0d.

The Parish Church and the ancient portion of the town are built upon a steep hill of limestone, at the foot of which flows a small stream, Walsall water, one of the main sources of the river Tame. Thus Erdswick quaintly says: "Tame, holding on the same course, makes haste to receive the Walsal water. Walsal water, then, taketh its first spring not far from the two Wirleys, Great and Little, and the third Wirley called Norton, for that it stands north of the other two."

Walsall itself is surrounded with numerous mines of coal, iron, and limestone; while it is the chief seat of the saddlery trade in the kingdom. Its manufactures include every description of saddlery; saddlers' and coachmakers' ironmongery; currying and leather works; brass and iron foundries and glass works; spectacle and brush making, and numerous other branches of industry.

The town is finely situated, and lies some distance outside the limits of the "Black Country," a fact for which it is indebted to a wide fringe of green fields, pleasant walks, and a healthy, bracing atmosphere. It possesses wide modern streets, public pleasure grounds, and an abundance of good residential houses, all of which tend to give it a homely and prosperous appearance.

Finally, it is supplied by the London and North Western and Midland Railways, and by the Birmingham Canal Company, with ample means of transit

to every part of the kingdom, a fact which has contributed in a large degree to its present prosperity.

Such is the modern town, the history and development of which it is now proposed to examine in detail, by the light of those scattered fragments of the past which still remain untouched by the hand of the spoiler or by the ravages of time.

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## EARLY TIMES.

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### THE ANCIENT BRITISH PERIOD.

Any history of Walsall would be incomplete which did not examine, for better or worse, those fragments of tradition with which the place and neighbourhood abound; and thus it will be well, at the onset, to investigate, so far as it is practicable, the early condition of the country around, and to enquire what vestiges, if any, still remain of those primeval races which occupied this district during the pre-Roman period and for centuries afterwards, until finally they became absorbed into the families of their Anglo-Saxon invaders, or were driven forth as exiles into the wilds of Wales or the mountain fastnesses of Scotland.

Of the early inhabitants of South Staffordshire, and indeed of the whole of Mid England, there are left but the most fragmentary and uncertain traces. Dr. Latham has well pointed out that the Britain of Cæsar is in reality only Kent, and that his description merely applies to the more highly civilized tribes of the Belgæ, who occupied the southern portion of the island. Other Roman historians did not penetrate



far into the interior of the country, and therefore we are left pretty much in the dark as to its actual condition. Bishop Percy has, however, remarked that Pictorial Hist., v. 1, pp. 7-9. "although the names of the towns and villages are almost universally of Anglo-Saxon derivation, yet the hills, forests, and rivers have generally retained their old Celtic names." From this circumstance we are enabled to glean a little information, but in many instances old names have beyond doubt disappeared, while in others new names have been substituted by the Anglo-Saxons for the ancient towns and hamlets of the primitive Britons.

Elton, "Origins of English Hist."

Taylor, "Words and Places."

From the researches of modern philologists and from the evidence of various place-names in this locality, it is rendered tolerably certain that two successive waves of Celtic people passed over South Staffordshire, and it is probable that even these were preceded at some remote period by an earlier race of Iberian Kelts from Gaul or Spain. The first and most numerous branch of the Celtic immigrants was the Gaelic, and they have left memorials of their track in such local words as Barr, signifying an eminence; Cannock, from Cnoc; and perhaps Bilston. The duration of their existence here is not known, but in course of time they appear to have been pressed onwards by the invading Cymri, who also have left behind as signs of their presence, words such as Hednesford, Lynn, Mansty near Cannock, and Hints, a way. Watling Street is probably a pure Welsh word, equivalent to "the work of the legion;" besides which, many of the Cymric words are incorporated with the Anglo-Saxon, one indication among others of a later arrival in Britain than the Gaelic.

Elton, p. 230.

By some historians it is maintained that at a period long anterior to the Roman invasion, South Staffordshire was inhabited by a British tribe, the Ordovices, a nation of Gaelic descent. They are described as a brave and warlike race, whose possessions extended over many counties. At the time of Ptolemy the geographer, who wrote his *Survey of*

*Britain* in the early part of the second century, this tribe had been replaced by the Cornavii or Carnabii.

The original settlements of this people appear to have been upon the banks of the Dee at Deva (Chester), and they seem at this time to have invaded Mid Britain, and driving out the Ordovices, to have founded a powerful monarchy.

Guest, "Origine  
Celticæ."

Besides Staffordshire, their possessions extended over the neighbouring counties of Shropshire, Cheshire, Warwick, and Worcester, while they had several large towns, of which Condate, situated near Middlewich, was the capital. Shortly before the arrival of the Romans, the Brigantes, a warlike and powerful tribe occupying the counties which now form the Northern Circuit of England, made war upon the Cornavii and partly broke up their kingdom, obliging them to transfer their metropolis to the city of Uriconium (Wroxeter) in Salop.

They had also a fortified station at Etocetum (Wall), but this was probably, like many other of the early British towns, only a collection of huts, with a stockade round them.

Shaw, r. i, p. 13

From the absence in this district of any pre-Roman coinage, it has been suggested that this tribe was distinct from and less civilized than those which occupied the more southern parts of Britain.

"The Celt, the  
Roman, and  
the Saxon,"  
p. 109.

It has also been supposed from the similarity of the name that the Ceangi or Cangi, a primitive word signifying herdsmen or woodlanders, held possessions in the forest of Cannock, but if so this was possibly merely as servants to the Cornavii.

One fact remains in connection with this dark subject, which is, that the Cornavii, after their subjection, appear to have remained as friends and allies of the Roman people. Numeri and Turmæ of this tribe are frequently mentioned in the Notitia, as serving in the armies of the later emperors.

But the Roman power declined, and it is singular that no further trace of this once widespread and important tribe has been discovered, either in this

county or in any other part of the island.

Such is all the scanty knowledge we possess of the native tribes, which inhabited the dense woodlands of South Staffordshire. Let us now turn to the vestiges still remaining to remind us of their presence.

In an enquiry of this kind it is well to bear in mind that we are necessarily thrown back almost entirely upon the inductive method, and, as it has been observed, "probabilities are the chief grounds upon which the student of ancient history has to proceed."

There can be but little doubt that the Cornavii, from their proximity to the wild Ordovices and still wilder Brigantes, partook to a great extent of their savage and warlike nature, and that the neighbourhood of Cannock Chase has been the scene of many a formidable fight, both with them and with the advancing Romans.

To this period may well be assigned the origin of some of those ancient camps, which may yet be seen in the vicinity, as at Beaudesert and Stonnall.

Our own church hill still bears the aspect of having been an old entrenchment, and it would be strange if, at a time when "every solitary hill formed the abode of a colony of native Britons," they had not made some good use of an eminence so well adapted for defensive purposes. Formerly the hill must have been higher and its sides much steeper than at present, and it would then form a very suitable advanced post for the protection of the level chase, which stretched away towards the east. Ablewell or Avalwall Street is from an old Norman-French word, signifying, it has been stated, "below the wall," and the word Dyche, which still exists, would serve to indicate that it was surrounded with a fosse. There is little doubt as to its use in Saxon times, while from its striking position it seems reasonable to suppose that it was a fortified post for many centuries previously.

Hist. of Wed-  
nesbury.

The hill of Wednesbury is another old site, and was used probably for a like purpose.

Near Stonnall is an ancient fortification, called on the maps "Castle Old Fort." Dr. Plot and other antiquaries believe this to have been a British post; whilst others, as Mr. Garner, refer it to the time of the Saxon Heptarchy. It is a broad earthwork of considerable size, and surrounded by a double trench. It is 160 paces in diameter, between the two entrances, which seem to have fronted to the south-east and north-west. Tacitus tells us that the Britons fortified in this manner, "*Septum agresti aggere, aditu angusto, ne pervius equiti foret,*" fenced with a bank of earth having a narrow entrance to keep off the horse. The general outline of this work can still be distinctly traced, although in many places the ground has been levelled and the trenches filled up. A barbed flint arrow head, together with iron spear heads and other warlike instruments, coins of the reign of Otho, Domitian and Nero, with fragments of Roman pitchers and urns, have been at various times found here, pointing probably to some conflict with the Romans, as also to a pre-Roman existence. The fort commands the old Chester Road, a primitive British way, along which may still be seen the traces of several early tumuli. Shaw thinks that this old fort, and also King's Standing, were thrown up during Saxon conflicts with the Danes.

Hist. of Shens-  
stone, p. 201.

Plot, p. 306.

Two and a half miles further on are the vestiges of another old work, called Knaves Castle. It is described as having been a small tumulus enclosed within three ditches, and having an entrance on the south side, and hollowed on the top. But all is now changed; mound and ditch have disappeared, leaving only a slight unevenness of the ground, while its bastions are formed by hayricks. It stood near the Watling Street, and its origin and uses have been the subject of speculation. In the time of Plot the tradition still held, that the heath was so infested with robbers that a watch was stationed here to guard strangers over it, which was repaid by a small gratuity. Others say that the robbers themselves

Stukeley, "Itin-  
erary."

harboured there, and hence the appellation of "Knave's Castle." Mr. Duignan thinks it was an ancient tumulus, and derives the name from Hnæf, a famous Danish sea king.

*Mid. Antiquary,*  
v. ii, p. 170.

Close by runs the old British trackway to the Castle Ring at Beaudesert.

*Plot,* p. 418.

This immense fortification is of undoubted antiquity, and from its lofty summit the view extends over nine counties. The camp is surrounded with a rampart and two ditches, and is almost circular, except on the south-east, which is pretty straight, giving it the figure of a theatre. It is 270 paces in diameter, and has two entrances, before the eastern of which are several advanced works. The following objects have been found on the Castle Ring—pottery, pieces of metal, flint chippings, ancient implements, mason's chisel, &c.

*Arch. Journal,*  
v. xx, p. 108.

Other large remains, doubtless of British origin, are found in Wrottesley Park, and at Abbots Castle Hills, in the same neighbourhood. This latter fortification occupies a space of three or four miles in circuit, and must originally have been of great strength and importance. The mounds at Tettenhall are also probably British. Camden considers that, if they were Roman or Saxon, they would yet have retained some distinctive name.

*Camden,* p. 634.

Near the Bourne Pool at Aldridge are the scanty remains of a once formidable encampment. The camp lay about 100 yards to the west of the old Chester Road, and was formerly called the Loaches Banks; but the name has long since disappeared from the maps. Like the one at Tettenhall, it can boast of no pedigree, a point which garrulous old Hutton, the historian of Birmingham, grasps at as strong evidence of its ancient origin. The ground plot of this work covered about two acres. It was surrounded by three large mounds, and by three small trenches, the whole forming a square of four acres. Each corner was directed to a cardinal point, most probably from the nature of the ground. By some authors it is looked

*Hutton,* pp.  
478-8.

upon as a Roman work, and as being a summer camping ground for the troops stationed at Etocetum. So far as I can learn, this rests merely upon supposition. As proof of its British origin, may be mentioned the narrowness of the trenches, the width of the mounds, the first of those on the side nearest the pool measuring twenty-four yards, and the name Bourne, or Bowen, derived from the Welsh. A plan of this fortification is given by Shaw in his History.

The Beacon itself bears inarks of having anciently been fortified. Salmon, writing in the last century, says "there are lines drawn round the hill (Barr Beacon) on one side, enclosing a large camp in form of a half moon." Several stones have been taken from the northern slope, one of which is stated to have been destroyed by gunpowder; while, a little to the south of the Bourne Pool, are two circular mounds, in the hollow of the Beacon, in a swampy situation. The larger one is 70 feet in diameter, and composed of sand.

*Hist. of Sutton,*  
ii., p. 136.

These ancient strongholds, all lying within the radius of a few miles, point to the conclusion that at one time this locality was largely inhabited and the scene of many a sanguinary struggle. There can be little doubt but that the Romans, as well as subsequent invaders, profited by them, occupying as they mostly did places of considerable strategical importance. They seized upon the sites, and adapted them more effectually for their own defensive purposes.

There are no tumuli in the neighbourhood which possess any distinctive British features. Their traces have long since been swept away, though the moorlands of North Staffordshire are still covered with them. Near here we have Barrow Cop Hill, close to Lichfield; Elford Low, Catts-hill, Knaves Castle, and perhaps the mound known as "King's Standing" on the old Chester Road. Barrow Cop Hill is supposed to cover the remains of three British Kings, who were slain in a battle near Lichfield about the year 288. By other writers it is referred to the time of the Saxons.

*Jackson, Hist. of*  
*Lichfield,* p.  
12.

In the time of Plot the ancient barrows on Ogley Haye called Catts-hill, and others on Calves Heath, were distinctly visible, but nothing reliable is known of them, and all traces of their presence are now swept away.

Other tumuli occur at Hints and Offlow, the latter of which gives name to the Hundred.

Plot, p. 405.

Elford Low was opened by Plot about 1686, who found it to be sepulchral and of the Roman period, but no coins or pottery were found to indicate its exact origin. From time to time human remains have been dug up, near the tumulus, proving the locality to have been an ancient cemetery. The British barrows as well as the camps were utilized by the Saxons, the latter, however, burying their dead at a small distance from the surface. Of the celts, stone hammers, and other monuments of this age, we have small traces, although they have been repeatedly found in other parts of the country.

Hist. of Sutton,  
p. 3.

In 1824 some human remains were discovered at Lower Stonnall, on the side of a hill at Greenborough Hill Farm. A grave was opened six feet below the surface, in the sand rock, and lying north and south. Fragments of human bones were found in it, and a few inches to the west, in the loose sand, two swords and some spear heads, celts, and relics of bronze.

At Cannock, near the church, was a large stone, the origin of which remains lost in obscurity. Erdswick mentions other stones at the same place.

Erdswick, p. 156.

"De Bello  
Gallico."

Druidism is closely intermingled with the history of this time, and there are reasons which lead to the conviction that ceremonies of the Druids were frequently carried out on the hills of Cannock Chase, at Wolverhampton, and in the more immediate vicinity of Aldridge and Barr Beacon. In the pages of Cæsar we meet with the earliest and best description of this singular people and their customs. Druidism was a form of religion common to all the Celtic nations. It was not only a centre of moral and religious matters, but was also an

educational and refining principle, while its chiefs were regarded with great honour and veneration by the half-cultivated tribes around them. They derived their name from Drus or Deru, signifying in Celtic, an oak, on account of the sanctity with which they regarded that tree. Rapin, v. i, p. 4.

In British times the great forest of Cank covered the whole of this locality, and there are still left some remains of the gigantic oaks which flourished within it. The Fair Oak on Cannock Chase measured nine yards and a half in girth; the Wrottesley Oak fifteen yards. A hollow oak in Beaudesert Park allowed eight people to stand up in it, while another oak close by measured forty feet in circumference. Some relics are still left of the Shire or Scyre Oak, which was a very large and ancient tree, possibly 2,000 years old. It is mentioned in very early documents, and marks the boundary between the parishes of Walsall and Shenstone. Remains of large oaks have been exhumed on the Wednesbury Road, in Rotton Meadow, near Wednesbury, and in other places. We may therefore conjecture that this locality would be naturally attractive to these religious devotees, and, as will appear later on, there are several tangible remains which give additional weight to this supposition. Garner, Staffs., p. 400.

Druidism is thought by some to have been originally native to Britain, and thence transplanted to Gaul. At times, the schools of Britain were thronged with students, occasionally amounting, according to one ancient author, to some thousands, but doubtless this statement must be taken *cum grano salis*.

The Arch Druid enjoyed the highest authority amongst them. He resided in the centre of Britain, and is interesting locally, because it has been assumed, it must be admitted upon somewhat slender authority, that he lived near here, and Druid Heath near Aldridge is said to have been his dwelling-place. The word Alrewic is assumed to mean "ancient station," and Shaw imagined that here was a Summer Nightingale, Staffs., p. 1084. Shaw, v. i, p. 10.



seat of this high priest, and he points out, near to a pool at the east end, a small space of ground encompassed with a treble ditch, and having an area of 80 yards by 25. Close at hand are other mounds and entrenchments, one to the south being surrounded with a ditch. Neither the Greeks nor the Romans ever used treble ditches, and we are thus led to the belief that this work was constructed either by the Britons or the Druids. Its small size would render it useless for defensive purposes, and it was probably, therefore, the site, either of an ancient residence, or of some Druidical temple. In this country, these buildings appear to have been built of wood, and have thus been wholly destroyed by accident or time. Concerning the pool, Cox, writing in 1720, calls it

Cox, *Staffs.*, p.  
11.

“Drudemere, which at other times is generally dry, but, upon the approach of a dearth of corn, overflows in great abundance, which perhaps may be imputed to the rains, which usually are the cause of dearth in England.” Both pool and entrenchments have now disappeared, and the exact situation cannot be made out with any degree of certainty.

With regard to the name of Druid Heath, which has lent plausibility to much that has been said about it, Mr. Duignan has pointed out that in early times a family named Dru held the lordship of Aldridge, and he thinks that in all likelihood the name has descended from them. In connection with this subject, it must be also mentioned that Shaw has assigned the camp near Bourne Pool as a Winter residence of the Arch Druid.

*Mid. Antiquary*,  
vi., p. 134.

Once a year a general assembly of the Druids took place, and there seem grounds for the belief, both from its situation and from other evidence, that this took place on Cannock Chase, and that Barr Beacon was a favourite spot for their great sacrificial solemnities. Shaw observes that “nothing could be better than this hill for the observations made by the Druids on the heavenly bodies. The prospect from it is perhaps as beautiful as from any part of England.

The Druids, we are told, gave notice of their quarterly sacrifices by fires made on high hills, and none I am sure in these parts is better fitted for that purpose. For the same reason, it was afterwards thought a proper place to alarm this part of the kingdom, by firing a beacon placed there, on the approach of the piratical Danes." It may here be noted that the Beacon Hill itself rises to the height of 750 feet above the sea level.

Dr. Oliver maintains that Druidism was practised in many parts of South Staffordshire, and particularly on the hill of Hamtune, where the church now stands. The words Cannock and Colfield, though of undoubted Saxon origin, are considered by Mr. Shaw to bear a relation in meaning to druidical religious rites. The locality, lying, as it does, in the centre of England, and corresponding, as it does, to the authenticated position of the Arch Druid's abode in other countries; the existence of several areas and entrenchments, lying close together, and which cannot be satisfactorily accounted for; together with the adaptability of Barr Beacon and of Cannock Chase for the sacrifices of the priests, and for the culture of their favourite science astronomy, are among the chief reasons which have influenced antiquarians in their conclusions upon this dark subject. A recent author has summed up the matter as follows: "It is more than probable that all this is true; still it is only a question of probability, but the evidence is sufficient to justify belief."

Hist. of Wolver-  
hampton  
Church.

Finally we come to the ancient British roads, or more properly trackways. These were generally of the rudest description, narrow and circuitous, most of the travelling being then done on foot or on horseback. That the Britons possessed roads of a better description, by which they conveyed their chariots, is certain, but they were principally near the sea coast. The country was, however, here and there crossed by good roads, and we have one of their principal thoroughfares near here, in the old Chester Road, which is undoubtedly pre-Roman, and beyond

Brownhills is known as the "Welsh Way." Near the New Mills is an ancient road leading from Wednesbury and through Caldmore to the foot of the Church Hill, thence down Rushall Street to Wall. Another old way runs through Aldridge; thence it may be followed to Knaves Castle, and on to the camp at Beaudesert, the latter an early British foundation. Vol. xxxv, p. 108. A writer in the *Archæological Journal* remarks, "these old roads show the lines of communication, and when we see the camp at Beaudesert connected by an old way with Knaves Castle and Old Fort, we may fairly argue as to its age."

Looking back, then, to those distant times, we can see "as through a glass darkly," the primitive Britons living in their simple huts of wood, with thatched roofs and an aperture in the centre, serving the double purpose of window and chimney. We can see them clinging with reverence to the hills around, believing that there they obtained a closer communion with their gods. Their primitive camps crowned the hill summits of Wednesbury, and we may fairly conclude of Walsall also; a mode of defence sufficient to protect them, their families and their cattle, from the incursions of neighbouring tribes, but utterly inadequate to withstand the trained arms and determined bravery of the Roman legions. If we cannot claim for the Angli Mediterranei that degree of cultivation attained by the maritime tribes in constant intercourse with the Gauls and other foreign nations, we may yet safely infer that they were far from being the fierce and wild barbarians which some authors have pictured. Read in the daylight, and deprived of the mists of prejudice and ignorance, their history indicates some considerable civilization, with an organized system of kingly government, a love of trade, and skill in artifice; it delineates an element of our ancestry, of which we have surely no reason to feel ashamed.

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## THE ROMAN RULE.

We pass now from the haze and uncertainty of speculation. We are brought face to face with Imperial Rome and the almost everlasting marks she has left upon this country and neighbourhood. But though the Romans came here, their rigid stoicism seldom deigned to mention names, other than those of the powerful towns, by means of which they held in check the native population. They have left no names in this locality by which we can identify their actual presence, but a few miles away towards Lichfield lie the foundations of massive walls, the sole remains of their strong military centre of Etocetum now known by the name of Wall. The famous Watling Street passes here on its way from London to Chester, and the Rykeneld Street, after running over Sutton Park, crosses it and pursues its way towards York.

We know but little of the Roman Conquest in this part of Britain. The Cornavii appear to have united with the Brigantes in opposition to their common foe, and it was not until the reign of Vespasian (A.D. 70—78) that this latter tribe was subdued by Petilius Cerealis.

Pict. Hist., v. i  
p. 81.

The construction of the great roads near here may most easily be referred to the next few succeeding years, under the stern government of Agricola, when he lay at Chester. By the year A.D. 81, all the nations to the south of the Great Wall were in subjection, and the military lines of the Romans everywhere perfected. The country was then divided into five large provinces, the third of which, stretching from the Thames to the Humber and containing this part of Mid-Britain, was called Flavia Cæsariensis.

Such in brief was the Roman Conquest in these parts; let us now examine the few remains around here, which have been ascribed to this period of our history.

It has already been pointed out that Etocetum was one of the chief towns of the Cornavian Britons.

The Romans appear to have seized upon the advantages of the site, and the fact that from here branched off three of their important thoroughfares.

Mention of the name occurs first in the Itinerary of Antoninus, and the spot has been identified by Stukeley, Camden, and other eminent antiquarians. Salmon has indeed tried to show that Wall was Uxacona, and that Barr Beacon was the real site of Etoctum, but his conclusions have not been accepted by any author of note and may be therefore disregarded.

Etoctum was situated directly on the Watling Street, and was midway between the stations of Manduessedum (Mancetter) and Uriconium (Wroxeter). Its remains first attracted the notice of Camden in 1586. He says, "I surveyed the Watling Street very accurately, in hopes of finding Etoctum, and by good luck I have at last found it. I met with the ruins of an old city near the Way, scarce a mile south from Lichfield. The remains of the walls there encompass about two acres of ground, called the Castle-Croft, as if one should say 'the field of the castle;' and here have been found two ancient pavements, wherein appeared Roman bricks. Near this stood another ancient little city, on the other side of the Way, which was demolished before William the Conqueror's time, as the inhabitants from an old tradition tell us; and they show the place where the temple stood, guessing it to have been a temple from the largeness of the foundation; and they produce many coyns of the Roman Emperors, which are the most infallible proofs of antiquity."

Camden, vol. i,  
p. 635.

Both Plot and Stukeley visited the place and recorded their observations, but the old pavements and visible parts of the ruins have long disappeared. The walls were constructed of strong mortar, rubble, stone and bricks, and in some places measured eleven feet in thickness, which were traced for about 50 yards. A few of these old foundations may still be seen, while Roman coins and fragments of pottery are not unfrequently turned up by the

plough. The castle stood in the angle between Watling Street and a cross road called the "Fosse," leading northwards towards Lichfield, and bounded on the other side by Port Lane. The Temple probably stood in Butts Close, and on a lower elevation than the castle. The visitor to this neighbourhood will not fail to be struck with the large number, size and shape of the stones which enter into the structure of many of the buildings and fences about; and it is far from unlikely that they represent portions of the old city. Large numbers of these stones were used, without doubt, for building the Cathedral at Lichfield.

Among the antiquities which have been found here are mile stones, flower pots, some red earthenware with figures upon them of bucks, fragments of pavement and coins of Nero, Domitian, and a gold Otho. Plot also makes special mention of a Roman Pillar. Most of these relics were dug up here in 1690. In 1873, some excavations were made by the Archæological Society, which resulted in the discovery of various ornaments, roof tiles, Samian ware, earthenware pipes and coins. At the back of Castle Croft were discovered the remains of a cemetery, with many specimens of Roman urns and fragments of human bones. A paved road was discovered in digging the foundations of Wall Church, while the houses themselves had glazed windows, were heated by hot air, and supplied with baths.

Transactions,  
1874.

Etocetum, although a powerful station, a military centre, and very possibly the Præsidium of the Romans, was never a large and fashionable town like Uriconium, which in point of size exceeded Roman London, and in addition was possessed of the luxury of a fine theatre.

The neighbourhood of Wall is rich in Roman remains. An old peasant observes, "The fields are full of old walls; I have broke three ploughs in one day; no tool will stand against them. It has been more expensive to bring the land into its present condition than the freehold is worth." These old

Hutton. "Hist.  
of Birming-  
ham."

walls still extend in every direction, covered only by the turf, while in one field they come, in large masses, above the surface itself. The city is supposed to have been destroyed by fire about the 5th century.

Barely a quarter of a mile south lies Chesterfield, Shaw, v. i, p. 10. "the camp in the field," said to be the oldest city in England, and used in all likelihood for the supply of food for the neighbouring fortress; besides which, the pavements, vestiges of houses and ornamental pottery ploughed up here, lead to the supposition that it was used chiefly as a residential resort.

In the south-west angle, where the Rykeneld crossed the street-way, was a camp.

Lichfield is but two miles distant, and may reasonably be supposed to have arisen from the ruins of Wall, as Shrewsbury did from those of Wroxeter.

Lomax, "Lichfield," p. 184.

At Pipe Hill, on the road from Wall to Lichfield, was another Roman entrenchment. It was composed of the solid trunks of oak trees, fixed upright in the ground. The timber which Mr. Shaw examined was quite black at the bottom, but still bore the marks of the axe. The barricade was divided into pieces about twelve feet long and ten to twelve inches in thickness. Each piece contained a cavity three feet down the middle, for purposes of observation, and the discharge of weapons. The work was traced for a distance of 500 yards, in a straight line, and was originally strengthened by bastions at the ends. A plan of this singular structure is given in Shaw. Several Roman coins have been turned up on the site, and an old Roman road, the Fosse way, passes from Etocetum, through Pipe, on its way to the Chase.

Before leaving Wall and the darkness which obscures its history, we may notice one other incident connected with it.

Jackson, "Lichfield," p. 24.

Tradition relates how, in the great persecution which darkened the reign of Diocletian and his colleague Maximian, the Roman soldiers from Wall surrounded the British Christians, on the spot where Lichfield now stands. Here they murdered them in

great numbers, and left them unburied, to be the prey of birds and beasts. The name of the city is supposed to mean "the field of dead bodies," and its coat of arms represents a landscape with many martyrs in it, who have been massacred in various ways.

Formerly, there were traces of several Roman camps in this vicinity, but now few vestiges of them are left.

At Shareshill are the remains of two square fortifications, supposed to belong to this time, while the camp at Bourne Pool, as stated previously, has been thought by some authorities to have been a Summer station for the troops at Etocetum.

Shaw has described a circumvallation at Barr Shaw, v. i, 14. Beacon itself, "drawn round the hill on one side enclosing a large camp, up to the military way, in form of a half moon. Several sub-divisions have been made, which works may have been altered by the Danes or Saxons." As already noted, Barr Beacon was considered by Salmon as the site of Etocetum, and the remains at Wall to be those at Uxacona. I have been unable to find the slightest remains of this work, which has been effectually removed by the plough.

Dudley, Wednesbury, Oldbury, and Oldford near Perry Barr, appear to have been also occupied by the Romans, and an old road, the Portway, still runs from Dudley, through the Quintain, to join the Rykeneld Street at Selly Wick.

Two of the great Roman Roads pass within a few miles, the Watling Street or Street Way, on its path from London to Chester, and another, the name of which is lost, though at present it is identified by Guest and others as the Rykeneld Street. This runs from the north, through Etocetum to Oldford at Perry Barr, and thence through Birmingham to Salinæ, the modern Droitwich. The Rykeneld Street, where it crosses Sutton Park, is still in fine preservation, and could very readily be adapted for use, if

Origines Celti-  
cæ, v. ii, p. 225.  
230.



the need should ever arise. Hutton grows enthusiastic upon the vista of this old road, as seen from the King's Standing: "The eye at one view takes in more than two miles. Struck with astonishment, I thought it the grandest sight I have ever beheld, and was amazed that so noble a monument of antiquity should be so little regarded." It must, however, be stated that farming operations have destroyed, in a great measure, this once famous scene. Near Streetly Station we can still clearly make it out, and can note, on either side, the gravel pits, from which the workmen constructed the roadway. In the course of three miles there remain over a thousand of these little hollows. Near the track of the Rykeneld Street, through Sutton Park, is Rowton's Well, supposed to have served as a Roman bathing place, and further on, where it crosses the Old Chester Road, by a still perceptible rise, is a field called Roman's Field, where coins of Domitian, Hadrian, and other Roman Emperors have been turned up.

Midland Anti-  
quary, v. i, p.  
132.

The name of Watling Street has given rise to much speculation. Thierry says it is a Saxon corruption of Gwydelin, "the way of the Gael," while Mr. Duignan deduces it from the Welsh as meaning "the work of the legion." Many authorities concur in the belief that it was one of the main British trackways across the island, and that it was re-constructed by the Romans. In the time of Camden it went by the name of the "Street Way," while Stukeley, in his *Iter Boreale* describes it as the direct road to Rome: "From Chester, through London, to Dover and Rome is a straight line." This road, in its passage through Wall, has been diverted from its course, probably on account of the main street having been blocked with rubbish when the city was destroyed.

It is worthy of note that the Roman forts and streets in this locality were principally the work of the 20th legion, which had its headquarters at Deva (Chester), and in this the 2nd legion rendered them much assistance.

Lastly, it must be observed that, although no tokens of the Roman occupation have been discovered in the parish of Walsall itself, yet they have been found in close proximity to it. Coins of Nero, Vespasian, and Trajan were dug up at Wednesbury in 1817, while others have been ploughed up at Stonnall, Bilston, Lichfield, Roman's Field, and Perry Barr.

*Hist. of Wednesbury, p. 4.*

Some years ago, the boss or umbo of a Roman shield was found on Hardwick Farm, at the north end of Great Barr Common, half a mile from the Rykeneld Street. Plates of iron were found with it, but too oxydized to be capable of preservation. This relic is now in the museum at Birmingham. It is of bronze, circular, and two inches across. The relief is well executed, and represents a captive stripped and bound to an oak, while two female figures with long flowing hair, perhaps Druid priestesses, are in the act of immolating him. One is armed with a club, the other with a short sword. In the background are other female figures, bearing his helmet, cuirass, &c. In the foreground lie a sword, shield, and a musical instrument "like a viol;" also a garment and pieces of armour. The design has been supposed to figure the death of Orpheus, when beaten by the women of Thrace.

*Garner, Staffs., p. 544.*

In 1795, some workmen employed on a farm at Linley, near Walsall, came upon a Roman fibula and several ancient coins, and in 1692 a pig of lead was turned up at Hints, near Tamworth. It measured twenty-two and a half inches in length, and weighed 150 pounds, and bore the following inscription:—"Imp. Vesp. VII. T. Imp. cos."

*Pitt, p. 148.*

By some writers it has been thought that iron was smelted and manufactured by the Romans, and especially at Oldbury, Smethwick, and Wednesbury. That they used the limestone at Daw End, Linley, Rushall, and about Walsall, is almost certain. Immense quantities were needed for the construction of their roads and works, and apart from this district

there is not, for miles, any available supply. Moreover, from Wall it could be despatched with ease to any part of the kingdom.

Such are, in this neighbourhood, the sole tokens of that once mighty race, which, for four hundred years, held this island in subjection, and whose patricians and chiefs must have often pursued the chase in the dense woods around.

One by one the legions departed, and gradually the native tribes again acquired the mastery. The Imperial towns became desolate, and finally overthrown; the martial roads were deserted, and again the silent forest stretched with unbroken solitude around the base of our old church hill.

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#### EARLY WALSALL.

We arrive now at a period of much interest, for it marks the establishment here of an English settlement and the consequent origin of the name of Walsall.

In considering the early colonization of this part of the county of Stafford, it will be well to recall, for a moment, its topographical position and relations, as they appear to throw a few rays of light on the subsequent progress of events.

*Making of Eng-  
land, p. 75.*

"At the close of the Roman occupation," says Green, "the basin of the Trent remained one of the wildest and least frequented parts of the island." The great northern border of Arden, "the largest of all the forests of Britain," lay just to the north of our present Walsall and Wolverhampton, and was marked roughly by the line of the Watling Street, but more accurately, according to Green, by a series of hamlets,

which now stretch across Staffordshire and which bear the name of Woodend. There is one near Shenstone, another at Walsall itself, and another near Sedgley, while names such as Walsall Wood, Essington Wood, and others, still appear to mark its ancient boundary.

To the north lay the forest of Cannock, wild and almost inaccessible, to the fastnesses of which the Britons resolutely clung, and for many years kept at bay their English foes. Between lay a flat, open tract of country, through which ran the Watling Street, and along which the West Engle hordes ultimately forced their way towards the valley of the Severn. This and a similar tract to the north of the Chase, became the fierce border frontier between the Engle and the Welch, and gave rise to the name Mercians or men of the March.

The history of Mid England itself, during Saxon times, was an eventful one. The wave of conquering invaders swept slowly but resistlessly over it, and it may be observed that, so far as the Romano British people were concerned, it was a process of utter extermination and a gradual and sullen retirement of the driven out race.

Stubbs,  
"Constitutional  
History," vol.  
1, p. 50.

The great kingdom of Mercia was founded towards the close of the 6th century, when, according to Henry of Huntingdon, Crida was crowned as its first king. This monarch was stated to be the tenth in descent from Odin or Woden, and he commenced his reign in 584, probably owning at this time the supremacy of Æthelberht.

Partly from its central situation and partly from the warlike character of its successive monarchs, the Mercian kingdom was, from first to last, the scene of constant strife, while its limits were as constantly varying in size, from its diminutive figures under Crida, until the year 794, when, under Offa, its boundaries stretched uninterruptedly from the Humber to the Thames. At this time it comprehended all the Midland counties, and ranked as the largest and most powerful division of the Heptarchy. But from the

moment of Offa's death, which happened only two years later, it fell with great rapidity, and lapsed finally into a small and unimportant tributary kingdom.

Green, "Making  
of England,"  
p. 208.

Of its internal history we know little, for as Lappenberg says of this kingdom, we have left us "neither the name of an author, nor even a meagre chronicle." We know that it was a stronghold of Paganism until the time of Penda, and that during this period, according to Dr. Wilkes, "the Mercians, being heathens, were constantly warring against one another." We know also that in the year 654 the preaching of the gospel was first commenced in this neighbourhood by Northumbrian preachers, from the See of Lindisfarne, and that Penda himself, although a Pagan, quietly and unobtrusively watched the progress of the new religion, as it kindled throughout his domains. The death of this king proved a final blow to Paganism, for Oswiu the Conqueror soon completed the conversion of Mercia, and founded the Bishopric of Lichfield, and Diuma, a Scotsman, was appointed as its first Bishop. The good St. Chad, who shortly succeeded him, baptized multitudes in the rivers and waters of the neighbourhood.

We know also that Lichfield and Tamworth were the seats of some of the Mercian Kings, and that Cannock Chase and Sutton Coldfield, and the dense forest of Arden, which were then united, formed favourite hunting grounds for them.

From the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* we glean some scanty details of the military history of the time, and this district appears to have been the scene of several sanguinary struggles.

By some authorities it has been assumed that two of these took place at Wodnesbury, and the *Saxon Chronicle* tells that, "about 591, a battle having been fought at Wodnesbeorg between Ceawlin, the ambitious King of Wessex, and the Britons, there was a great slaughter, which resulted in the defeat of the former, who died shortly after, and was succeeded by his nephew Ceolric."

Also in the year 715, Ina, King of Wessex, "fought with Ceolrid, King of Mercia, at Wothnesbeorg, when the battle was undecided."

Very grave doubts have, however, been thrown upon the locality of these battles, and Guest, and with him Green, are unanimous in assigning Wansborough, in Wiltshire, as identical with Wodnesbeorg. That some unrecorded action did, however, take place, is probable from the fact that the ancient name of the valley lying to the east of Wednesbury is "Wigmore," which is A.S. for "the battle field."

*Origines Celti-  
cæ*, v. ii, p.  
253.

Passing on to the year 874, we find the Danes firmly established at the great Abbey of Repton, the burial place of the Mercian Kings, and from here they laid waste and subdued the whole of the surrounding country.

*Green*, "Con-  
quest of Eng-  
land," p. 106.

The battle of Westbury, a few years later, changed the order of events, and by the solemn peace of Wedmore, the Danish hosts withdrew, leaving all England, westward of the Watling Street, in the hands of Alfred.

For the next century and a half this border line was the scene of almost constant conflict, and tradition relates that the neighbourhood of Barr Beacon was witness to a great struggle between the Saxons and the Danes.

In the year 910 the Danish pirates made a great raid over Mercia, but they were met and defeated by a combined army of Mercians and West Saxons, under the command of Edward the Elder himself, at Tettenhall. The battle took place somewhere between Tettenhall and the Wergs, and is described as having been "so very terrible that it could not be fully described by the most exquisite pen." The victorious king pursued the defeated host across the border for upwards of five weeks, burning and destroying all he could lay hands on.

*Ibid*, p. 196.

In 911, the king being absent, the Danes made another descent upon Mercia, but, falling back laden with spoil, they were overtaken, and a momentous

*Ibid*, p. 198.

battle was fought at Wodnesfield (Wednesfield). There are several accounts of this event. One author says, "the Danes then retreated towards Wednesfield, where a bloody battle was fought, which raged for several hours, with little advantage to either army, when the Saxons were reinforced by Earl Kenwolf, and the contest was soon decided. The Danes were totally routed, leaving three kings dead upon the field. In this battle, while leading on the Saxons to the final charge, Earl Kenwolf fell mortally wounded."

Plot, p. 416.

Dr. Plot's account, taken from Florence of Worcester, is even more minute: "King Edward, with an army of West Saxons and Mercians, overtook the retreating Danes at the village of Wednesfield, and overthrew them in a bloody battle, wherein he killed Ecwills and Halfden, two of their kings; and Ohtea and Scurfar, two of their earls; nine other noblemen, and a host besides, of which great slaughter there are no remains but a low in a ground called South Low Field. Another field is called North Low Field, doubtless from lows in it, since removed, and such was likely Stowman's Hill, on the road betwixt Wolverhampton and Walsall." According to Pitt this Stowman's low or hill has been since removed to mend the roads, and nothing remarkable was discovered in it. "This battle," says Lappenberg, "had the important consequence of freeing England from the attacks of these formidable invaders."

After the defeat a great feast of rejoicings was held by the Saxons at Willenhall (Winehala), "the hall of victory," and the event was long celebrated by the national poets. At Lowhill may still be seen the remains of a large tumulus, while in Wrottesley Park are the vestiges of a large encampment, believed by some authorities to be of Danish construction, and to have been occupied by them about the time of these engagements. It must be observed that historians differ both with regard to the period and also the scene of these actions, but there is little doubt as to their having taken place about this time.

In this locality the Danes never appear to have gained a permanent footing, as there is scarce a name of purely Danish origin in the neighbourhood.

About the year 916 Æthelflæd, called the "Lady of Mercia," who had large possessions in these parts, fortified the commanding eminence of Wednesbury, although one tradition relates that the original castle was founded by Dudo, and only repaired by the queen. This wonderful woman must have been an adept at castle building. In the list of those she built, repaired and fortified, are Warwick, Tamworth, Cherbury, Bridgenorth, Runkhorne, Scargate, Fadesbury, Wareham, Strengate, Chester, Lichfield, Shrewsbury, Wigmore, Eadbury, Derby and Bremesbury. She also built a monastery at Gloucester, where she was buried. Ingulph says that "in respect of the cities she built, the castles she fortified, and the armies she managed, it might have been thought she had changed her sex;" while another writer remarks that "such was her prowess, that laying aside all feminine titles, she received that of King, as if Countess and Queen were inadequate." On the hill at Wednesbury are the remains of a large graff, in which traces of the ancient fort may still be discerned.

The Saxon castles were unlike the massive erections of later times. They generally consisted of one tower, and several courts, enclosed with an outside wall and a ditch. The castle served as a residence for the chief, and being constantly guarded, was a pretty safe place for refuge. Wednesbury castle was, therefore, no very conspicuous object in the landscape of those days; and the same may be said of Dudley, which occupied the same site as the present massive ruin.

It has been asserted that our own church hill was fortified by the same queen, but I find no evidence to support this conjecture. It is, however, not improbable that she strengthened the rude works then on the summit, and the name of Avalwall and Dyche would render this assumption more reasonable.



It certainly seems unlikely that she would allow an isolated position of such strategic strength, and within three miles of her own castle, to fall, uncared for, into the hands of her enemies the Danes.

Green, "Conquest," p. 415.

Finally, we may notice that, in 1016, Cnut led an army of Danes into Mercia, and they harried and burnt and slew all they came to in Warwickshire and Staffordshire.

Such are the main facts with regard to this neighbourhood, which may be gleaned from the ancient historians, and though scanty, they serve to shed a few rays of lurid light on the dark obscurity of the subject.

The foundation of the English settlements around here was marked also by the creation of the various old place-names with which this district abounds, and among which we discover, for the first time, that of Walsall.

The origin and meaning of the name of our town has, from time to time, been the cause of no little controversy, and it still remains doubtful whether or not a satisfactory solution has yet been arrived at.

The great philologist Max Müller observes that, "to get at the origin of local names, we must go back to the earliest spelling." Now at different times the name of Walsall has been spelt in almost every conceivable manner, and in various early deeds and records we find the following different forms, taken, as nearly as possible, in chronological succession. Great diversity of spelling is mainly attributable to the mistakes of the Norman scribes, who derived their information from the Saxon inhabitants; nor must be forgotten the great change worked by the lapse of ages in the very names themselves.

- |                           |     |     |                       |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|-----------------------|
| 1. Walesho                | ... | ... | Anno 1004             |
| 2. Walveshull             | ... | ... | 25 Henry I. (1125)    |
| 3. Walesala               | ... | ... | 5 Henry II. (1159)    |
| 4. Wallshala              | ... | ... | 15 Henry II. (1168-9) |
| 5. Walisham, Walishala... | ... | ... | 21 Henry II. (1174-5) |

6. Walessale, Walessall, } Walesalle ...	John (1199-1216)
7. Wellyall, Wellchall ...	John (1199-1216)
8. Waleshill, Walleshill...	16 Henry III. (1231-2)
9. Walesall ...	12 Ed. I. (1283-4)
10. Walsale ...	Ed. I. (1272-1307)
11. Walsahall ...	4 Ed. I. (1275-6)
12. Waleshale ...	7 Ed. I. (1278-9)
13. Waleshall, Walleshalle	2 Ed. II. (1308-9)
14. Walsholma ...	6 Ed. II. (1312-3)
15. Walshale ...	13 Ed. III. (1339-40)
16. Walsshale ...	26 Ed. III. (1352-3)
17. Walssale ...	31 Ed. III. (1357-8)
18. Walleshale ...	16 Henry VI. (1437-8)
19. Walshal ...	29 Henry VI. (1451)
20. Walshall ...	36 Henry VI. (1457-8)
21. Wallsale ...	8 Ed. IV. (1468-9)
22. Walshalle, Walsalle ...	17 Ed. IV. (1477-8)
23. Walsall ...	2 Rich. III. (1484-5)

THE FOLLOWING ARE DIFFERENT FORMS SINCE THE TIME  
WHEN THE NAME TOOK ITS PRESENT SHAPE :

24. Wallsall, Wallsalle ...	3 Henry VII. (1487-8)
25. Walshehall ...	1485
26. Walsail ...	15 Henry VIII. (1527-8)
27. Waulleshal, Walleshaul	1545
28. Walson ...	1609
29. Wosall ...	1643
30. Wallshall ...	1668
31. Wallsal ...	1776
32. Walesale	
33. Walleshall, Walleshull.	

We may include also for the sake of completeness the following varieties, which are met with in the Public Records and other ancient documents :

Walsal, Wallehalle, Walsahalle, Wulshall, Walesall, Uleshall, Wadsall, Waleshal, Washale, Wassall, and Wallashall.

On examining these numerous forms we see that the name occurs first in its present shape so far back as the reign of Richard III. (1485), previous to which the more common variations met with are Walsale and Walesdale.

Many attempts have from time to time been made to explain the etymology of this place-name, and some of these we shall briefly notice.

Taylor, "Words  
and Places,"  
p. 383.

The difficulty lies with the root Wal, Wale, or Wales. The termination hal corresponds with the A.S. heale, or hall, or hala, signifying a hall or residence of some importance, and we have numerous local examples of this affix in Willenhall, Pelsall, Tixall, Tettenhall, &c. Dr. Oliver supposes, and with some show of reason, that this was a favourite locality with the Saxon Thegns, some of whom had their houses and courts at each of these places, where they maintained a rude baronial state.

Walsall Note  
Book, p. 53.

By some authorities the syllable Wal has been derived from the A.S. weald, a wood or forest, the word thus signifying in its entirety, "the house in the wood," and in support of this view it has been asserted that the neighbourhood was then densely wooded.

Antiquities,  
p. 31.

Mr. Chattock has evolved the etymology from weal—a wall or well—a well, and he construes it as "the hall on the old moat."

Edmunds,  
"Traces of  
History in  
Place-names."

Another authority derives it from Wallashall, and explains it as "the hall near the Roman fortification," from gwal, a wall, "in most cases, if not in all, denoting a site near a Roman fortress." There appears as little show of probability in this explanation as in the preceding one.

Again, it has been supposed that the termination hall, or all, is from the Gothic alh, and that it indicates the existence of some ancient pagan temple or deity. But although this district is considered to have been a great centre for Sun-worship, and although at Bilston, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton, and possibly Wednesbury, there are traditions of temples

dedicated to the Saxon deities, we have yet no scrap of evidence to show that our own church hill was ever devoted to a like purpose.

Next comes the more recent explanation of Mr. W. H. Duignan. He, together with Mr. Skeat, the eminent philologist, takes the root from the A.S. word *wealh*, (genitive *weales*, or in Mercian dialect, *wales*), which means a stranger, and he interprets it to mean "the hall of the stranger," and maintains that the Saxons gave it its name and settled in the surrounding country, but that the Celts continued to live in the place, and in amity with the Saxons. There is undoubtedly much in favour of this view, and Professor Blackie says that "the idea that the first half of the word is 'Welsh,' seems sufficiently plausible, as any Welsh settlement so far east would naturally attract attention, on the same principle that the wild Scots of Galloway gave rise to the predominance of the name of Scott in Roxburghshire and the Borders."

*Midland Magazine*, p. 23.

The Gauls were commonly called by the Germans *Walli*; while the Saxons called their Celtic neighbours the Welsh, and their country Wales. Cornwall was formerly *Cornwales*, "the horn occupied by the refugees;" and in the old chroniclers we meet with the expression North Wales and *Cornwales*. In Derbyshire is a small village called *Wales*, which marks, says Dr. Taylor, "where the British population maintained its existence in the hills, while the flood of the Saxon invasion poured around to the west."

*Camden*, v. xxx.

*Words & Places*, p. 42.

Again, it may be remembered that *Etoctetum* was a Roman town, but the Saxons, when they came, gave a new name to the crumbling ruins, and called them *Wall*. The student of German will take the root from *Wal*, and easily multiply these examples. In Staffordshire alone there are five *Waltons*.

*Erdswick*, p. 228.

Taking the name as it stands, and reading it in this light, we have "the abode of the Welsh," *i.e.*, "the strangers;" the hall or stone mansion, surrounded perhaps by his serfs and their humble dwellings, of

one of the native chieftains. Assuming this to be correct, the name of Walsall indicates, with great exactness, "the remnant of a Celtic people, surrounded by a cordon of Teutonic settlers."

Walsall Ob-  
server, Nov.,  
1879.

Finally we have the view, first, I believe, put forward by Mr. W. C. Owen, in 1879, and latterly, with elaborate force of argument, by Mr. W. H. Stevenson, of Nottingham, that the name is a personal one, and therefore quite distinct from that of "a foreigner or Welshman," viz., that Weales is the West Saxon genitive of the proper name Wealh (the Mercian form being Wales), and that the word in its entirety signifies "the hall of Wealh." In course of transit to its present state, the e of the genitive, as also the aspirate of the hall, have been elided, and thus we get from Weales-hall, the modern word Walsall, verifying the aphorism of Horne Tuke, that "letters, like soldiers, are very apt to drop off in a long march." Up to the present time this must, I think, be considered the most satisfactory and conclusive explanation of an acknowledged and difficult problem.

We must here notice also a word which has given rise to much discussion, as well from its similarity of form as from the fact that it has been described by various authorities, as Shaw and Oliver, &c., as referring specially to Walsall.

Hist. of Wolver-  
hampton  
Church.

In the year 994, the Lady Wulfruna or Wolverine built and endowed a monastery at Wolverhampton. The charter conveying the various lands forming this endowment is a most interesting and valuable document, from the light which it throws upon the topographical state of this district at that remote time. Among other places, the boundaries of which are accurately defined, she gave (as is said) Weoleshale, or, as we find it in the Latin transcription, Weoleshala. Mr. R. W. Gillespie very shrewdly inferred, from the well-known carelessness of scribes, and from the circumstances that Pelsall, which did not appear in the charter, was yet found, at the date of Domesday,

among the possessions of Wolverhampton Church (whilst Walsall is not), that the Anglo-Saxon character for W had been confounded with P, and that the place really intended was Peoleshale, which still belongs to the Deanery of Wolverhampton. In support of this view, he gave actual illustrations of the confusion of these two letters arising from careless copying. Mr. Stevenson, on collating a Saxon copy of the charter, published in the *Monasticon*, with the Latin transcript quoted by Oliver, verified the mistake which had been made, and Peoleshale, or Pelsall, is now restored to its proper place among the lands of the ancient monastery of Wulfruna.

The modern name of Walsall stands quite alone. There is a Walsall End by Hampton in Warwickshire, evidently a corruption of Balsall, which name abounds in the locality. We also meet with names like Warsill, near Pateley Bridge, in Yorkshire, and Warshill, an ancient camp near Kidderminster, but the derivation of both these words is sufficiently obvious.

Having assigned to Saxon times the name of our town, we must briefly glance at two questions which naturally present themselves.

Firstly, can we form any idea as to the time during the Saxon period when the little settlement of Waleshale first came into existence? On this point it may be remarked that the English settlements about here may be fairly referred to the 6th and 7th centuries, that time when the Engle found their way into Central Britain, and when Crida, and afterwards Penda, became kings of Mercia.

Making of Eng-  
land.

Secondly, we may enquire what was the nature of the settlement here, and are there grounds for the opinion which has been offered, that a town existed here prior to the Norman Conquest, and that it sent, in all probability, representatives to the Parliament of that time?

This question is even more difficult than the former, from the total absence of record. There

seems, however, to be some room for conjecture. The ancient charters of the town point back to the fact that the Borough of Walsall was of "ancient demesne," while they confirm, and do not confer old privileges, such as Frankpledge and various other prescriptive rights, from which we may infer that the early Lords of the Manor arrogated to themselves the privileges of a borough, and that probably they attended as representatives to the Wittenagemot, for the burgesses or householders on their manor.

Vol. iv, p. 312.

Mr. Oldfield, in his *History*, gives a list of ninety-seven boroughs, among which is Walsall. "All these," he says, "have charters, and have most probably sent members at some former period since the reign of Ed. I., but for which no summonses are to be found, though they were unquestionably Parliamentary Boroughs in the time of the Saxon monarchy, when every borough in England was represented, as well as the rural tythings, which chose their representatives in the County Courts." It will be needful to refer to this subject later on, but it may here be observed, that if Walsall, as seems likely, was a borough before the Conquest, then, according to the invariable custom, it would certainly send a member or members to the representative assembly or Wittenagemot.

Rapin, v. i, p. 33.

We have now reviewed, by the aid of such meagre materials as have survived, the general state of this district up to the time of the Norman invasion. The lesser incidents of the period are wholly lost, owing to the absence of any Mercian writer on local history, and through the dim mists of antiquity we can only hear the din of warlike hosts, which have left their traces in local names and grass-grown mounds, a state which subsequently passed into a tolerably peaceful occupation of the country. "Altogether," as Rapin says, "it is difficult to form a general idea of that revolution which peopled Britain with new inhabitants, and introduced a new face of things over the whole island."

Viewing the prospect at this time from the church hill, while the forces of the Conqueror were massing on the Norman shore, the outlines of the small settlement could doubtless have been clearly distinguished—a typical Saxon burgh, consisting of “nothing more than a hundred, or an assemblage of hundreds, surrounded by a moat, a stoccade, or a wall.” The early village or burgh would most likely arise on the slope now occupied by the High Street, with the hall of the eorl or thegn in the centre, surrounded by the humbler dwellings of the ceorls. The situation would then be an attractive one, with the stream flowing closely below, and above, the old hill summit, still capable of defence. By degrees the manor would become more clearly defined, the colony more numerous, a mill would utilize the flowing water, and, as was the general custom, a small church would arise on the hill mound, a conspicuous place, and one favourable for the manorial gatherings. In the language of Green, “all the features of English life were there. We see mills grinding along the burns, the hammer rings in the village smithy, the thegn’s hall rises out of its demesne, the parish priest is at his mass book in the little church that forms the centre of every township, reeves are gathering their lord’s dues, forester and verderer wake the silent woodland with hound and horn, while the moot gathers for order and law beneath the sacred oak.” A few narrow ways leading up towards the hill, one from Rischale or Rushall, where already stood a moated hall and tumulus, from which, in recent times, fragments of human bones and Saxon coins have been recovered; another from Dudelei (Dudley), with its “castle in the woods;” another from Bromwic (West Bromwich), where already was erected a Saxon church. Yet another passed by the “old Wallows” to Wodensburgh (Wednesbury), where a new church replaced the old fortress of Æthelflæd. These and the dense spreading woods on either side would complete the picture.

Conquest of  
England, p. 7.



## HISTORY OF THE MANOR.

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We now enter upon the history of the Manor, but for many years both preceding and after the Conquest, there remains little record to guide us safely through the momentous events which marked that stormy period. The obscurity is still further darkened by the unfortunate omission of any direct reference to the place in the pages of Domesday, which would have thrown a flood of light upon the subject, by giving us the names of the Saxon possessor, the tenant in capite, and other valuable information.

Seebohm,  
"English Village Community."

Long before the arrival of the Normans the country was mapped out in manors, the nature of which may be defined generally as "the estate of a lord or thane, with a village community usually in serfdom upon it."

My conviction is, as already stated, that, prior to the Conquest, the Manor of Walesdale was, like others in the neighbourhood, already sketched out; that it was of "ancient demesne," i.e., a royal manor in the time of Edward the Confessor or William the Conqueror (1042-1066); and that the tenants claimed various privileges and immunities which those of other manors did not enjoy.

In the absence of all reliable evidence, we may first notice, as being of some interest, a deed of pre-Norman date, which refers to land in this locality, and which first makes special mention of the name.

In the Muniment Room at Beaudesert (Marquis of Anglesea) is the original parchment will of Wulfric Spott, founder of the ancient and once wealthy Abbey of Burton. This will is printed in the III<sup>rd</sup> part of the A.S. manuscripts, in the preface to which it states, "The charter is profusely adorned with gilded and painted letters, and must at one time have been a handsome specimen, but now crumbling into dust, and its colours are almost faded away." The will contains King Ethelred's confirmation of the grants of Wulfric Spott. It is dated 1004, and is printed at length in the *Monasticon*, but according to Sir Francis Palgrave, the translation by Sir Wm. Dugdale is not particularly accurate. In this charter it states, "I bequeath to Morcar the land at Walesho." On the dorso is written, in a later hand, "Waleshale and Wodnesbury, 2 hides in Offalawe Hundred."

Of Wulfric Spott but little is known. According to the chronicle of the Abbots of Burton, he was "Consul ac comes Merciorum," was of the royal stock, being a relative of Ethelred, and was killed in battle against the Danes, A.D. 1010. From other authorities we learn that he long held the high situation of chief Councillor of State to King Ethelred; but he is characterized by several of our historians as having been a traitor on many occasions, both to his king and his country. His lands appear to have been very considerable, being worth about £700 yearly. That his bequest might be ensured, he gave to the king two hundred mancuses of gold (about £750), to each Bishop five mancuses; and to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the town of Dumbleton. This gift was accordingly confirmed by the king in 1004. Tradition related that he was buried in the old church of Burton, and his tomb was long pointed out, but it has now disappeared. By one authority he is said to have been father to Leofric E. of Mercia. Morcar, to whom he bequeaths Walesho, was his brother, while Ælfhelm, Earl of Northampton, another brother, was father to Algiva, who married Canute and became

White, Staffs.,  
p. 533.

Erdawick,  
p. 348.

Diocesan Hist.  
of Lichfield,  
p. 47.

the mother of Sweyn, King of Norway, and Harold, King of England.

Conquest of  
England, pp.  
567-577.

Passing on now to the time of the Conquest, we find that Staffordshire was then held by Earl Eadwine, the last lord of Mercia, as part of the province under his rule. It is probable that he offered little or no opposition to the claims of the Conqueror, as both he and his brother, Earl Morkere, are found tendering to William submission and homage, and afterwards for several years in friendly attendance at his court.

Eyton, Domes-  
day, pp. 26-31.

Earl Edwin became implicated in the Staffordshire rebellion of 1069, when William came down in person, and speedily quelled it, by desolating the country, and slaughtering and driving out its inhabitants. Both Edwin and Morkere appear to have rejoined the court of William, but in 1071 the brother earls, to escape an impending imprisonment, fled into the country. Earl Edwin, after wandering about for some time, was assassinated by his own retainers, while journeying to the court of Scotland. His great estates fell into the Conqueror's hands, who disposed of them to his Norman barons. His brother Morkere joined the party of Hereward, in the Isle of Ely, where for a time he found a shelter. Of his ultimate fate there seems to be no record.

Ibid, p. 53, and  
Table 1.

From the Domesday Survey we find that in the time of King Edward the Confessor, the estate of Bresmundescote (Bescot and Walsall) was in possession of the crown, as "*Vetus Dominicum Coronæ*."

Ibid, p. 33.

In 1086 the great Survey was completed, and from that record we gather that not only was Staffordshire the poorest of Midland Counties, and in a chronic state of poverty and unproductiveness, but that large tracts of formerly arable land were lying waste and uncultivated. On this point Mr. Eyton remarks, "the desolation of Staffordshire, which largely endured to the year of Domesday, was simply depopulation, the slaughter of the inhabitants, or their emigration elsewhere," and it is interesting to

note that the number of people in the Hundred of Offlow at this time was, according to the Survey, only 638.

In Domesday Book, Walsall is nowhere named. It is thought by Eyton to have been included under the heading of Bescot, the entry relating to which states that "*in Bresmundescote est una carucata terræ vastæ.*" These two last words are especially pregnant with meaning, implying as they probably do, empty houses and unoccupied or depopulated estates. One may thus conjecture that this district had suffered from the causes already mentioned, especially when we find the same expression applying to surrounding estates, as Willenhall, Wednesfield, Pelsall, Shelfield, Norton, and Wyrley.

With regard to Bescot, the record further tells us that the Saxon possessor was King Edward, and the Domesday owner King William. In the Survey we also find Blocheswic (Bloxwich) and Scelfield (Shelfield) set down as members of the Royal Manor of Wednesbury, and likewise in the demesne of the king. This, in Mr. Eyton's opinion, was owing "to the then obscurity and wasted condition of Walsall." On the restoration of the latter, both Bloxwich and Shelfield became restored to their normal positions as members of the manor of Walsall, rather than of Wednesbury, with which they could have had no well-defined connection.

The omission from the Survey of the name of Walsall, together with other places of great importance at that time, is one of those problems which have puzzled antiquarians from the days of Sir William Dugdale.

Thus we find cities like London, Winchester, and Abingdon, are totally unmentioned; while closer at home is Tamworth, a place of note at that time as the residence of Offa and other Mercian Kings, possessing a castle and also a mint, where coins were struck by Edward the Martyr, Edward the Confessor, and even by William himself. Burton-on-Trent,

Palmer, "Hist.  
of Tamworth,"  
p. 51.

1087. — Stone, Colwich, and Newcastle-under-Lyme are also unnoticed.

Staffs., Domesday, p. 12.

Stoke-upon-Trent is an analogous and perhaps explanatory instance of the case as regards Walsall. In Domesday, the former town is not expressed, but it is implied in Penkhull, which, at the present time, is one of the largest townships constituting the town and parish of Stoke. As Mr. Eyton remarks, "the name of Stoke has superseded that of Penkhull." In this way, Bescot, at the time of the Conquest, may have been supposed to take in Walsall, the trouble of surveying it being thought either unnecessary or even undesirable. Walsall afterwards attained a greater prominence, and now includes, not only Bescot, but also, as already mentioned, two other estates, Shelfield and Bloxwich, then reputed to be members of Wednesbury.

Hist. of Tamworth, p. 51.

Many suggestions have of course been made as to these blanks in the great record. Thus Dean Littleton thought that towns which were "terra regis," or royal boroughs, being well known as to their extent and value, it was needless to name, as they claimed the right of being taxed according to their ancient cess, while Domesday was only compiled in order to know the true value of every man's lands, with a view to tax them.

The Commissioners themselves have been accused both of partiality and of bribery; while another authority suggests that "some parts of the country were either left untouched, or the record of such enquiry was either co-evally suppressed or co-evally lost."

In this latter sentence lies most probably the truth as regards Walsall. Neighbouring manors were terra regis, and yet they were surveyed, while Shelfield and Bloxwich were clearly outside the manor of Wednesbury; nor must we lose sight of the fact that the direct object of the survey was prospective taxation, and it may have been politic to the king not to display on paper too many of his own possessions.

Mr. Gillespie believes "that Walsall was omitted from Domesday Book by an error in the transcription from the original rotulet of the Commissioners into the permanent Record now existing." I rather prefer to suppose that it was either suppressed for reasons of state or that the place itself was deliberately missed.

1087.

In the eleventh century the parochial acreage of Walsall and Bescot combined, has been calculated as representing 3,897 acres, while Bloxwich and Shelfield took in Walsall Wood, and comprised an extent of 3,985 acres.

Such are the only inferences we can draw from Domesday; we pass on now to trace the subsequent descent of the manor.

Soon after the Conquest the county of Stafford was divided among various of the nobles who came over with William and had given him substantial help. The Manor of Walsall is supposed to have been granted off, as a military fief, to William Fitzansculf, about the year 1086.

Erdswick, p. 1.

The only authority for this is Erdswick, who moreover tells us that it was underheld by one Robertus, who likewise held from Fitzansculf lands at Aldridge and Barr, and it may be assumed also Bushbury and Penn. Little is known of this Robertus, who was commonly called Robert of Barr. In the Pipe Roll of 22 Henry II. (1175-6) Robert de Barra, a descendant, is named amongst many other tenants of Gervase Paganel, who are heavily fined for forest trespasses.

Ibid, p. 301-3.

William Fitzansculf held most of the surrounding estates, but we have no distinct evidence that he ever received the Manor of Walsall. It rests upon supposition alone, though we must remember the acumen of Erdswick as an antiquary, and that, as appears from other instances, he might have possessed sources of information which are now lost.

This William Fitzansculf was the son of Ansculf de Purchengi, Sheriff of Surrey. He was in all probability a companion of the Conqueror, although

Salt Collections,  
v. i, Art.,  
Ansculf.

1138-1150. his name does not appear in the Roll of Battle Abbey.

Manche, "Com-  
panions of the  
Conqueror."

At the time of the great survey he was the possessor of vast domains in England. In Staffordshire alone, he received 25 manors for his fidelity to his chief, the value of which amounted to £29 11s. 8d. Besides these, he had 14 manors in Worcestershire, 5 in Warwickshire, and 47 in other counties. In this neighbourhood he held, in capite, Bromwic (West Bromwich), Honeswarde (Handsworth), Barre (Barr), Alrewic (Aldridge), and Rischale (Rushall). His principal castle and seat was at Dudelei (Dudley), which had before belonged to Earl Edwin, and of which he was created first baron. Little that is definite is known of this Norman adventurer, and Dugdale observes, "whether Ansculf had any issue or not, or of what became of him, I could never yet discover." It is said by another authority that he had a daughter, Beatrice, who married Fulke Paganel, the next possessor of his estates.

Booker, "Hist.  
of Dudley  
Castle."

Fulke Paganel was succeeded by Râlp, his son, a noble of very turbulent disposition, for it appears that he took the side of the Empress Maude in 1138, against King Stephen, arming several of his castles against that monarch, among which was that of Dudelei. In July or August of that year, Stephen marched against it, plundered the neighbourhood, and burnt the castle to the ground. This Ralph left six sons, the eldest of whom, Gervaise, succeeded to his property, and founded the Priory at Dudley, in accordance with his father's intention. In 1175 he supported the young Prince Henry against the king, for which treasonable conduct his lands and goods were forfeited to the Crown. Hawise, a daughter of Gervaise, married a John de Someri, whose descendants, as also those of the Paganel, afterwards had an interest in the manor.

# PEDIGREE OF ANSCULF, PAGANEL, AND SOMERI.

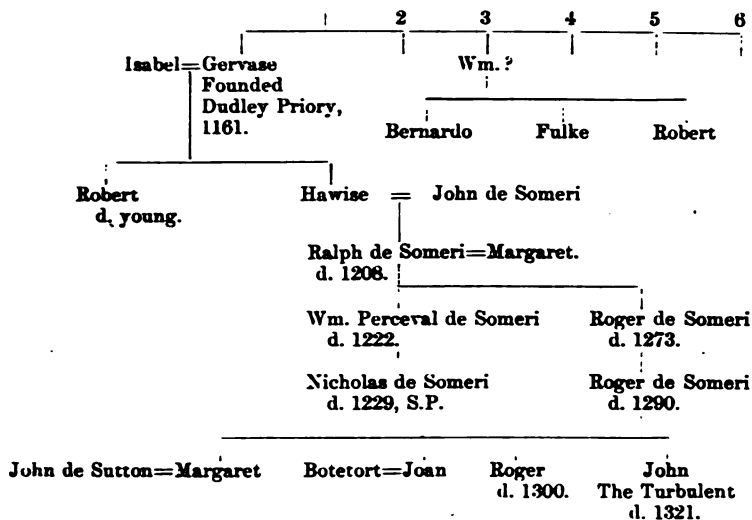
Ansculf de Pictengi,  
Sheriff of Surrey.

William Fitz Ansculf.

Ralph Paganel  
of Drax.,  
Yorks.

Beatrice = Fulke Paganel.

Ralph Paganel  
Held Dudley for the Queen in 1138.





1159-1166.

In or about the year 1159, the Manor of Walsall was granted by Henry II. to Herbert Ruffus. The original is in Latin, is undated, and is contained in Fol. 130 of the Chartulary of Walsall, in the British Museum. This is the earliest document relating to the manor, and runs as follows:—

“Charter of Henry II., made to Herbert Ruffus, of the Manor of Walsale.

“Henry, King of England and Duke of Normandy, and Aquitaine and Count of Anjou, to his Archbishops, Bishops, Abbots, Earls, Barons, Justices, Sheriffs, Servants, and all others his liege subjects, both French and English, throughout the whole of England, greeting. Know ye that I have granted and confirmed to Herbert Ruffus (Rous) my servant and his heirs Walsale with all its appurtenances. Rendering to me £4 yearly, for custody and account for all services. Wherefore I will and strictly enjoin that Herbert and his heirs after him shall have and hold the land aforesaid, truly and peaceably, freely, quietly, honorably and wholly, with all its appurtenances, in wood and in plain, in meadows and pastures, in ways and byeways, in water, in mills, and in all places, and in all things, and with all liberties and free customs belonging to the same.

Witnesses,

THOMAS, The Chancellor.  
RICHARD DE LUCI, Custom Fermor of Windsor  
HENRY FITZGERALD, Chamberlaine.  
RICHARD DE CAMVILLE.  
ROBERT DE DUNSTANVILLE.”

At Santone  
(Apud Santonium).

There can be little doubt as to the date of this charter being June, 1159. The king, with his chancellor, was abroad the whole of this year prosecuting his attack on Nantes and Toulouse. In June, he was at Saintes, in Saintonge, on his way to the siege of this latter place, and from here the charter is dated. This same deed is quoted by Mr. Eyton, in his “Itinerary of Henry II.,” as an evidence of his whereabouts at this time.

It may here be re-stated that Walsall, being a manor of ancient demesne, the tenant in capite annually paid so much rent to the Crown, while the advowson of Walsall, and the right of tallage, remained in the hands of the king. It was rated at £4 blanche of the Corpus Comitatus, but, not being absolutely given, it does not appear among the Terræ

Datae of the Pipe Rolls. Until the date when it was given in subjective form to Herbert Ruffus, crementa, or "special taxes," would be charged upon it, and these, contrary to the opinion of Mr. Eyton, were occasionally charged afterwards. 1159-1190.

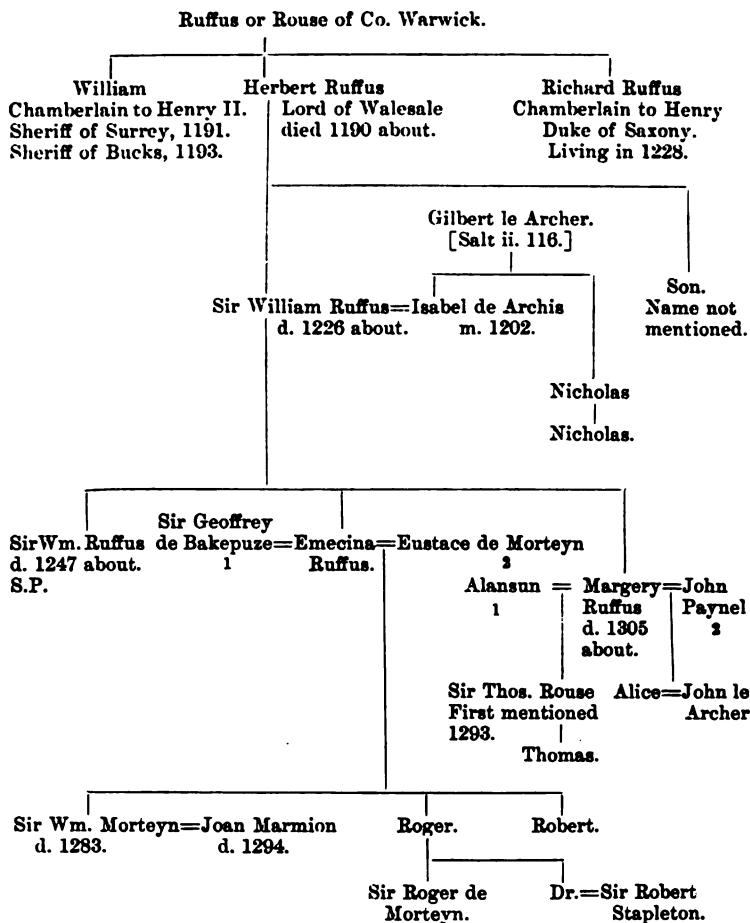
Herbert Ruffus, or Rous (the Red), who now came into possession of the manor, was a knight of Robert of Stafford. From whence Herbert came is uncertain; but in 6 Henry II. (1159-60), we meet with his name, as being excused his quota of £1 6s. 8d. to the royal treasury. This, I think, refers to the Manor of Walesale, of which he had been possessed only a few months, and the concession was probably a reward for military service with the king. Pipe Rolls.

In the Black Book of the Exchequer, published in 1166, it is stated that Herbert Ruffus holds half of a knight's fee of the Bishop of Coventry. This was, most likely, for the Manor of Caldecote, in Warwickshire, which is named in Domesday among the Bishop's lands, and which passed subsequently into the hands of the Rous family.

Herbert Ruffus seems to have had two brothers, one of whom, William, was Chamberlain to King Henry II., while the other, Richard, appears to have filled a like office for Henry Duke of Saxony. The Duke had married a daughter of the English king, and had been a frequent visitor to his father-in-law, before the death of his Duchess in 1189.

On the death of Herbert Ruffus in 1190, leaving male issue, their uncle, the Chamberlain of Saxony, buys from the Crown the wardship of his two nephews, and in the Pipe Rolls, 2 Rich. I. (1189-90), we find the following entry in support of this theory:—"Richard, Chamberlain of the Duke of Saxony, renders account of 20 marks for holding the wardship of his nephews, with their lands in Walesale. He has paid it into the Treasury, and is discharged." The second of these nephews must have died, as we meet with no subsequent mention of him.

The following short pedigree may serve to make clear the relationship of the Ruffus family, and also to show the subsequent descent of the Manor:—



The Pipe Rolls, a series of ancient Exchequer Documents, shewing the entire land revenue of the Crown Estates, contain many items relative to the Manor of Walsall at this time. The Rolls for Staffordshire are extant from the last year of the reign of Henry I. (1130), but the earliest entry relating to this town is in 9 Henry II. (1162), when Alexander Clericus, the Sheriff of Staffordshire, renders account to the king of £5, as his due for Waleshal. He is made free by the Treasury. 1162-1177.

We may here remark that the ferm of a county was usually a round sum, which the Sheriff, on entering office, covenanted with the officers of the Royal Exchequer to pay annually, as the estimated value of the king's demesne within any particular county. He acted, in fact, as collector to the king. The Ferm of Staffordshire was what is called "blanche," that is, a ferm reckoned at the treasury in dealbated or purified money. Payments in common money were termed "tale," and the diminution in value from "blanche" money represented, in Staffordshire, about 3 per cent., as the coinage in this county was reputed exceptionally pure.

15 Henry II. (1168-9). The men of Wallshala render account of 2 marks, as an aid on the marriage of the Princess Matilda, levied this year on the royal estates.

19 Henry II. (1172-3). In this year an assize, afterwards a tallage, was imposed on the king's estates, and the Pipe Roll states that "the Sheriff owes three marks for an assize on Walisham."

20 Henry II. (1173-4). The Sheriff renders account of 40s. of assize at Waleshala. He pays into the Treasury 26s.8d., and owes 13s.4d.

21 Henry II. (1174-5). The same Sheriff renders account of 13s.4d. at Walisham.

23 Henry II. (1176-7). An auxilium on boroughs and royal demesnes was levied upon Staffordshire in this year, and the auxilium of Waleshala amounted to half a mark.

1177-1182.

24 Henry II. (1177-8). A crementum (or special tallage) of £4 was set upon the crown estate of Waleshala. This probably had reference to some recently discovered advantages in the specific estate, such as mines, &c. It was not levied upon surrounding demesnes of the king.

Eyton.

25 Henry II. (1178-9). A crementum of £5 3s. 0d. is set upon the Sheriff's ferm of Waleshale, as against £4 the year before. The Sheriff pays the sum, less 32s., which the king had allowed him to better the stock on the manor (ad perficiendum instauramentum), and which was chargeable on the crementum.

26 Henry II. (1179-80). The men of Waleshala render an account of £5 for their sureties, which they have forfeited. They pay 50s. into the Treasury, and owe 50s. The same year the Sheriff renders account of £6 crementum on Waleshale.

27 Henry II. (1180-1). The Sheriff renders a similar account for this year. The men of Waleshale also acknowledge their debt to the crown of 50s. They pay 16s. 8d., and owe to the Treasury 2½ marks. The Sheriff also renders account of 45s. for occasional profits (de perquisitionibus de pluribus annis), for many years past. This is an interesting entry, and would apparently indicate some irregular profits, which the Sheriff derived from this ferm. It is probable that it refers to profits on mining, while it also suggests that the contract of the Sheriff with the Exchequer did not include any right on the part of the fermor to the minerals. The Rev. R. W. Eyton thinks that the crementum represented a permanent and progressive value; the perquisitio an adventitious and possibly evanescent value.

Salt. Coll., v. i.  
p. 101.

28 Henry II. (1182). A crementum of £6 is this year set upon the Sheriff, in regard of his fermorship of Walsall. The men of Waleshale pay the 2½ marks which they still owed to the Treasury.

During the next few years of the reign, crementa are regularly charged and paid by the Sheriff, and

in 33 Henry II. (1186-7), the Sheriff renders account of £2 2s. 0d., as dona or assize on Waleshala. This tax was assessable on the king's demesnes and escheats. 1186-1190.  
—

34 Henry II. (1187-8). The Sheriff renders account of £6 for Waleshale, and this same year the men of Waleshale owe 21s. as a donum or tallage. Entries amounting to the same are found in the Roll for the following year.

Herbert Ruffus died in or before the year 1190, leaving his two brothers, the younger of whom, Richard the Chamberlain of Saxony, held the Manor of Waleshale in wardship for the sons of Herbert, who were under age. This Richard was a favourite with the king, and at Winchester, in August, 1177, the king made him a grant of lands. In 1181 he and his brother William are witnesses to the Charter of Godstow Nunnery. Fordern, v. i.  
p. 41.

William Ruffus, the chamberlain of the king, had been a justice in Eyre; he was Sheriff of Surrey in 1180 and 1191, and of Bucks in 1193. Eyton,  
"Itinerary of  
Henry II."

William Ruffus, the heir of Herbert, seems to have come into possession of his estate at Waleshale about the year 1197, when the Pipe Rolls state that "William Ruffus owes £5 for holding his lands in Waleshale, which were being enquired after (qui requirebantur) in Norfolk and Suffolk." This latter is an evident mistake for Stafford, and by no means a solitary instance. In the following year the Sheriff accounts to the Crown for £5 from Wilikino Ruffus, for lands which he held in Waleshale.

During the preceding decade the following extracts relative to the manor occur in the Pipe Rolls, and may here be conveniently noticed.

2 Rich. I. (1189-90). The men of Waleshala owe 21s. as a donum. The Sheriff acknowledges the payment of this amount in his return for the next year.

11 Rich. I. (1188-9). A tallage of 2½ marks is set upon land at Waleshale.

In 1199, the name of William Ruffus is mentioned as defendant in an action brought by William of

1199-1202. — Rushale, concerning some land there, while the following extract from the Pipe Rolls belongs to the same year:—

"William de Brai owes 10 marks for having puralea in the wood at Waleshale, but it ought not to be exacted from him, because William Ruffus had been fined £5, that he might have no puralea made as is contained below."

"William Ruffus renders account of £5, that there might be no puralea made of the wood at Waleshale."

The word "puralea" is interesting as implying the free liberty of the chase, and indicates that the wood of Waleshale had been recently afforested by the king or his predecessor Richard I.

Several interesting deeds belong to this period, but in each case they are undated.

Walsall Calen-  
dar, No. 1.

The first is a grant by William Ruffus to the burgesses of Walessale, of freedom from service, custom, and secular demands, excepting tallage by the king, &c. This deed will be more fully noticed when we come to the municipal history.

The next is a charter of Roger de Bentley to William Ruffus of Waleshale, of land, wood, and water, at Benetleia, yielding for the same one pair of white gloves, at All Saints' Day, for all services, &c.

Another is a charter from the Dean and Chapter of Wolverhampton to William Ruffus, of a certain wood called Hogeley, for which he rendered to God and the church of Wolverhampton four pounds of wax, at the feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul, for all services, &c. This deed relates to some part of Ogley Hay, and is contained with the others in the Cottonian MS. in the British Museum.

In 1201 we find William Ruffus engaged in a suit concerning the dowry of a certain Margery, wife of William Odo. The contention involved, among other things, 2 virgates of land in Waleshale, "ad ostium ecclesiæ," at the door of the church.

Record Office.

The Curia Regis Rolls of 5 John (1202-3), state that William Ruffus gives to the lord the king one

mark, for holding a licence in common with the Abbot of Oseneia, of a certain pasture, by the pledge of Thomas de Erdington, &c. 1203-1225.

In 1203 William Ruffus married Isabel de Archis. Salt. Coll., v. ii,  
p. 116. She was a ward of the Crown, and for the possession of her husband paid into the Royal Treasury the sum of 20 marks. How or when William was elevated to the rank of a knight there is no evidence to show, but in 1219 his name is mentioned as one of twelve elected knights in a plea case at Westminster over a dispute concerning ten acres of land in Sandwell.

4 Henry III. (1219-20). William Ruffus again appears in a case in a plea of the wardship of land of Geoffrey de Campville.

In the 7th Henry III. (1222-3), William Ruffus Patent Roll. and others were assigned as Justices for the king's domains in Staffordshire for the collection of tallage, and "concerning our timber which is to be sold and that has been laid prostrate throughout all the Bailiwicks of Staffordshire so that the money may be laid up for some religious house in our Bailiwicks of Staffordshire &c." The name of William Ruffus frequently appears in documents of this time, and shews that he enjoyed considerable favour with his sovereign.

7 Henry III. (1222-3). In this year William Ruffus was summoned by Magister Serlo de Sunning, the then rector of the church of Waleshall, to answer by what right he claimed the advowson of the church there, &c. This claim will be more fully noticed in dealing with the history of the church.

A deed without date, but about the time of the preceding one, occurs in the Monasticon, whereby William Ruffus grants to the Abbot and convent of Hales Owen "the church of Waleshall, with its chapels of Wednesbury and Rushall, for maintaining the good work of the same house," &c. Several circumstances seem to point out the year 1225 as being the date of this important deed, influenced probably by the quarrel of the lord of the manor



1224-1226. — with his rector, and also, by his approaching death, which appears to have happened at this time. We are here indeed confronted by a difficulty which, from lack of sufficient evidence, cannot be cleared up.

Fee of Fines.

The Fine Roll for 2 Henry III. (1226-7) records that in this year William Ruffus gave 5 marks for the king's confirmation of the grant of Walshall, made by King Henry, grandfather of the king, to Herbert Ruffus, the grandfather of William. The word "grandfather" must either be a mistake, or we must conceive a second William, who succeeds as heir to his father at this time. The term cannot be a mistake, for the deeds of this time are generally very exact in point of relationship, and moreover, the word occurs in several other deeds which follow. The mystery is only solved by assuming the death of William, and the succession of his son William as heir. As will be seen, Isabel Ruffus, his widow, retained some interest in the estate. In most of the following deeds this conclusion must be borne in mind. We must not part from Sir William Ruffus the elder without again drawing attention to the benefits conferred by him upon his burgesses of Walesale. His charter became the basis on which the copyholders of the manor successfully relied in the time of Sir Richard Wilbraham, when he attempted to exact from them new burdens and obligations.

Plea Roll.

In the 9th Henry III. (1224-5), Henry le Hulle, the attorney of William Ruffus the younger, appears against Robert de Colevilla on a plea of land by Philip de Haya.

Ibid.

In 10 Henry III. (1225-6), the above suit is continued, and Robert de Coleville sues William Ruffus of Walesale for two carucates of land in Walesale, of which one Warine de Walesale, his grandfather, was seized as of fee, &c., in the time of King Henry 1st., who was grandfather of the grandfather of the king, and from Warine the right descended to Eva, his daughter, and from Eva to Robert, her son and heir, who now sues. And William Ruffus appeared

and stated that he ought not to be called upon to plead to the writ, because King Henry II., the grandfather of the king, had given the land to Herbert Ruffus, his *grandfather*, by a charter, which he produced, and he prayed for judgment, whether the king should not warrant the land to him. It is considered by the court that William should not be required to answer for the land before the king is of age. As the Fine Roll records, the case was brought before the king in the following year, and for the sum of five marks the following confirmation was granted:—

1225-1228.

## CHARTER ROLLS.

William le Ruffus.

Henry the King to all to whom, &c., Greeting.

Know ye that We have granted and by this our present Charter have confirmed to William Ruffus and his heirs The gift which Henry the King our Grandfather made to Herbert Ruffus the Grandfather of the aforesaid William and his heirs . . . . of Wuleshil with all the appurtenances Yielding therefore to us and our heirs 4 . . . . per annum for custody and account for all services Wherefore We will, &c., that the same William and his . . . . after . . . . shall have and hold the same well and in peace freely quietly honorably and entirely with all the appurtenances in wood and in plain in meadows and commons in ways and in paths in waters and mills and in all places and things and in all liberties and free customs belonging to the same as the Charter of the aforesaid Henry the King our Grandfather reasonably shows These being witnesses T. W., Bishop of Carlisle H de Burg Henry Earl of Gloucester and Hereford H de Aldethil Ralph Fitz Nicholas G de Crevecumb Henry de . . . and others.

Given by the hand, &c., the 22nd day of April in the year

2. Henry III.  
(1226-7).

12 Henry III. (1227-8). In this year William le Rus appeared as surety for a freeman named Gilbert, in a duel which was to be fought, owing to a suit between Henry de Aldethelgh and Henry Baghot. Plea Roll.

The Plea Rolls for 1228 state that William Ruffus of Walesdale gives a mark for licence of concord with William the Archer, in a plea of land at Caldecote; and again in 12 Henry III. (1227-8), he is one of twelve elected knights in a suit at Stafford

1239-1247.

The Testa de Neville, compiled in 24 Henry III. (1239-40), states that William Ruffus holds the Manor of Waleshale in fee farm, rendering thence, per annum, IIII<sup>or</sup> II. (£4).

Erdswick remarks, but from what authority is not quite clear, that the manor was held in fee farm of King Henry III., at a rental of £26 19s. 9d. This statement refers to the worth of the manor, which, by the time of the Tenure Roll for Staffordshire (about 1255), had increased in value to £30.

The last we hear of Sir William Ruffus is in September, 1241, when the Plea Rolls state that a day is given to him in a plea of quo warranto, versus the lord the king. This may be assumed to have had connection with the advowson of the church.

Waleshale  
Chartulary.

When Sir William died is uncertain, but in 1247 we find Margerie and Emecina, his sisters, disposing to others their rights in the great fishery and park of Waleshale. From this time to the death of Ralph Bassett, in 1390, the manor was held by various descendants of the Ruffus family, and the succession becomes somewhat complicated, partly owing to the defective information which has reached us, and partly to the peculiar mode of tenure of the Feudal system, but more especially to the breaking up of the estate into various portions.

On the death of Sir William Ruffus, the manor appears to have been divided and held jointly by his two sisters, Margerie la Rouse and Emecina or Eneicin. Margerie married for her first husband the son of Richard de Alansun, and held a moiety of the manor. She seems to have been a lady of very benevolent disposition, and to have made various gifts to the church; while deeds are extant, one of which finds a place further on, shewing that she was in the habit of purchasing serfs for 15s. or 20s., for the purpose of making them free men. During her reign, as part mistress of the manor, she was constantly involved in legal proceedings and quarrels with her relations and tenants. It is further recorded

that she was imprisoned at Stafford, on the charge of contriving the death of two men, a charge from which she was subsequently acquitted. She was afterwards imprisoned again, and tried for the murder of her own husband, but the record does not state the result of the trial.

1247.  
—

Emecina Ruffus held the other moiety of the manor, and was married to Sir Geoffrey de Bakepuze. Of de Bakepuze but little is known, save that he belonged to a Derbyshire family, who owned the Manor of Barton Blount, and who forfeited it in the 4 Richard II. (1380-1), on account of the outlawry of the last possessor. The Erdsricks of Sandon are reputed to have espoused the cause of Bakepuze. Both Margerie and her sister Emecina married a second time, the former to John Paynel, or Paganel, a descendant of the Dudley family of that name, and the latter to Eustace de Morteyn. A reference to the Ruffus pedigree may simplify and help to explain the subsequent course of events. It is compiled mainly from the Huntbach MS., and from other old deeds of this period, but owing to several of these latter being undated, it is impossible to vouch for anything like complete accuracy.

A large number of deeds relating to this period are preserved in the Calendar of Deeds, and the Cartularium de Waleshele, in the British Museum. We shall notice here only those which serve to elucidate the descent of the manor.

32 Henry III. (1247-8). An agreement was made this year between Sir Geoffrey de Bakepuze and Emecina, his wife, on the one part, and Margery, daughter of Sir William Ruffus, and Isabel, formerly his wife, to exchange the right and claim which the two latter had in the whole park and great fishery or pool of Waleshele, for the rights of the two former in the Manor of Caldecote in Warwickshire, together with the alternate presentation of that church. Of Caldecote, it may be noted that William le Archer held it, 12 Henry III. (1227-8), and past it the

1255-1270. following year to William le Rouse, from whom  
 Dugdale, p. 776. descended, says Dugdale, Margery la Rouse or Ruffus.

In the Tenure Roll of the Hundred of Offlow, tempo Henry III. (about 1255), it states that "Geoffrey de Bakepus and the son of Richard Alansun hold the Manor of Waleshal of the lord the king, in fee farm, by charter rendering thence annually to the king £4 to the Exchequer. And they had a free court of old and a fair and market from the time of King Henry, but by what warrant is unknown. And they had the privilege of defending all suits except that of 'Withernam' (*i.e.*, reciprocal distress), see Bla. Comm. III., 149. They took waifs and had view of frank pledge, for which they paid 7s. to the Sheriff. Walsall then answered for one hide. And the said Geoffrey de Bakepus had there a park beneath the forest emparked from the time of King John. And the said manor was worth £30 per annum. The church was in the gift of the king, belonged then to the abbey of Hales, and was worth 40 marks per annum. Be it known also that Margery, daughter and heiress of William Ruffus, who holds a moiety of the said manor from the lord the king in fee farm, is married to the son of Richard de Alansun by the Bishop of Coventry."

Erdswick,  
p. 301.

Harwood, in his edition of Erdswick, says that Henry III. gave a moiety of the manor to his servant Robert Ruffus, the other moiety being in possession of Bakepuze. Robert is evidently a mistake for Herbert.

Plea Roll.

A charter, dated 27 January, 47 Henry III. (1263), grants to William de Morteyn the privilege of hunting with dogs the fox and cub (*catum*) through the royal forests of the county of Stafford.

Patent Roll.

Wm. de Morteyn, who now appears on the scene, was a son of Emecina, the widow of Bakepuze, and in 54 Henry III. (1269-70) there is recorded an assize of novel disseisin, which Margery la Rouse arraigned against Richard de Alizun and Wm. de Morteyn concerning a tenement in Waleshale.

In 55 Henry III. (1270-71), we find an interesting and instructive assize, which throws light on the divided ownership of the manor. Margaret la Rusues William de Morteyn and Richard de Alizun her husband "that they had unjustly disseised her of the Manor of Caldecote excepting one virgate of land. Margaret withdrew her suit and a convention was made between them, by which William acknowledged the manor excepting one virgate to be the right of Margaret, and gave it up to her with the oxen and corn and other stores which he held there; and that as regarded the half of the Manor of Walesdale, respecting which a suit (*supra*) had been respited, both William and Margaret agreed to abide by the arbitrament of Robert Burnel, Philip Marmyon, William Bagot, and Ralph de Hengham, who delivered two alternatives. The first ordained that the half manor of Walesdale should be valued by legal men, and that William should assign to Margaret land elsewhere to the value of the said half, and that the said William and his wife should hold half the Manor of Walesdale for their joint lives, and after the death of both of them Margaret and her heirs may elect to take back the said half of the manor and to assign to the heirs of William land of equal value in exchange for it. The other alternative was that William shall hold the whole Manor of Walesdale, and shall assign to Margaret ten librates of land in a competent place, and shall give besides to her eighty marks. And as regards the damages which the said Margaret claimed for the disseisin, that they shall stand to the arbitrament of Robert Burnel and the others." The case was adjourned for discussion, but no settlement seems to have been effected, for in 3 Ed. I. (1274-5) we find another assize, &c., "whether William de Morteyn and Richard de Alazun had unjustly disseised Margaret la Russe of half the Manor of Walesdale excepting the capital messuage park and fish pond of the said manor." Margaret afterwards withdrew her suit, and an agreement was made between them by which

1271-1286. Margaret granted to the said William and Joan his wife half the said manor excepting the said capital messuage, park and vivary to be held by the said William and Joan for the whole life"—[rest torn off.]

56 Henry III. (1271-2). The Plea Rolls for this year state that William de Morteyne owed Margaret le Rus 90 marks, half to be rendered at the feast of St. John Baptist, the other half at the feast of All Saints, next ensuing, and if he should fail the Sheriff might raise the same by distress on his lands.

In 2 Ed. I. (1273-4), we again find, from the Patent Rolls, that Margerie la Rouse was in legal warfare with her husband and William de Morteyn. "Ralph de Hengham and Walter de Hopton are assigned to take an assize of novel disseisin, which Margerie la Russe arraigned against William Mortayne and Richard de Alensun [Alansun], of tenements in Walesdale." This suit is continued in the following year.

Patent Roll.

In 4 Ed. I. (1275-6), another assize of "mort d'ancestor" is arraigned by Margery la Rouse and her sister against W. de Shelfield and the Abbot of Hales, touching land in Walesdale, and against W. de Morteyne, touching a tenement in Walesdale.

In the Plea Rolls of this period are various suits between Margerie and others, which shew that, as lady of part of the manor, she was keenly sensitive as to her rights and privileges. Some of these suits will be noticed later on.

In 12 Ed. I. (1283-4), Sir William Morteyn dies, and his possessions are stated by an inquisition to have included "half Walesdale Manor."

The Charter Rolls contain the following entry:—"Roger de Morteyn Walesdale libera waren." His uncle having no issue he succeeds as nephew.

14 Ed. I. (1285-6). In the Pleas of the Forest of Cannock for this year, and under the heading of "New Purprestures," (encroachments,) we find the following

names as holding land in the manor:—

1285-1293.

“Waleshalle. William de Morteyn held in Waleshall four acres, now held by Roger his son (should be nephew), enclosed with a ditch and dead hedge, without warrant. Simon Jurdayne, one acre enclosed as above. Margaret la Russe, one acre enclosed as above. Richard Faber (Sagillarius) (Fletcher) half an acre do. Thomas Bonde half an acre, which John the Baker now holds. William the Carpenter one acre as above. Richard Dyrdy one acre as above. John, son of the Lord of Benetley, one acre as above, Nicholas Wodeman, one acre, which William his son now holds. Geoffrey, son of William the Fowler of Blockeswych, one acre, enclosed by a ditch and hedge. Robert le Roper, one acre, enclosed as above.”

A later entry states, “William de Morteyn enclosed two acres, now held by Roger his son (nephew), enclosed with a ditch and a dead hedge. The fence to be thrown down.”

At the same time Roger de Morteyn and John Paynel are fined half a mark for ancient destruction of woods. This John Paynel had married Margery la Rouse several years before this date.

The following deed belongs to this time, and proves the working of ironstone and coal mines at that period:—

Chartulary of  
Walsale.

“Likewise take notice how Margery la Rouse, lady of the moiety of the Town of Walsall, has granted to Mons Roger Morteyn and to his heirs and to his assigns, according to her power, a moiety of the profit of each manor, of mines as well of seacole as of iron, and likewise the fishery from the bridge of the Town of Walsale, as far as the New Mill.”

At that time there was a large sheet of water, or great fish stew as it was then called, covering the ground now occupied by St. Paul's Church, the Agricultural Hall, and the Post Office, the two brooks supplying it freely with water. The mill pool extended from Mr. Morris's shop to the County Court, and thence took the course of the present brook. The old mill, apparently a very ancient foundation, stood next to the *Observer* buildings; the New Mills on their present site, the date of the existing structure being about 1740.

A record dated 21 Ed. I. (1292-3), is of sufficient interest to be quoted in full. It is an assize, &c., if Philip Burnel, John Paynel and Margaret his wife,

Stafford Assize  
Roll.



1293.

—

and Thomas son of Margaret, had unjustly disseised Nicholas le Archer and Alice his wife of the free tenement of Alice in Waleshale, viz., of half the Manor of Waleshale.

"Philip appeared by William Hillary his attorney, and denied having inflicted any injury to the plaintiffs; and Margaret stated she had entered by Philip, and not by a disseisin, and that the tenements formerly belonged to her as of her inheritance, and that there had been an arrangement between her and the Lord Ralph Bassett, by which the brother of Ralph should have married the said Alice her daughter, and she was to have given to them half of the manor, and the arrangement had gone so far that she had enfeoffed Alice of the tenements, but had not put her into seisin of them, and she appealed to a jury, which found in her favour."

Chartulary of  
Waleshale.

Sir Philip Burnel whose name appears in this deed, held a part of Margerie's moiety of the manor, and this he subsequently passed to Sir Thomas Rouse.

21 Ed. I. (1292-3). In the Assize Roll for this year we find, "The jury presented that Margaret la Rouse held half the Manor of Walsale of the king in capite, which is worth £15 annually, and she was of the king's donation, and she is married to John Paynel, it is not known by what warrant. The Sheriff is therefore commanded to produce her. She and her husband John afterwards appeared and could not show the king's permission for the marriage, and they were fined 10 marks." At the same assize, Roger de Morteyn claimed free warren in his demesne lands in Walesale by a charter of the present king, which he produced and it was allowed. The right of free warren on an estate, which we shall often meet with, was merely equivalent to the modern phrase of "hunting, shooting, and fishing." The Roll likewise states that Roger de Mortayne, John Paynel and Margaret his wife, claimed gallows and assize of bread and beer, pillory and tumbrelle in their Manor of Waleshalle.

The jury of Offlow Hundred likewise state that Roger de Mortayn, John Paynel and Margaret his wife, hold the Manor of Waleshale, which is of ancient demesne and is worth £10 annually. And the said

Roger de Mortayn, John Paynel and Margaret his wife, stated they held the same manor of the king in capite at fee farm for £4 annually by the grant of King Henry, the great grandfather of the king whose charter to Herbert Ruffus they produced. And they say, that by the said charter, they claim in the manor two free courts yearly and to hear the same pleas in them that the Sheriff heard in his tourns, and to have a fair and market and all things appertaining to them, and they and their ancestors had always from the date of the charter enjoyed these liberties. And because the lord the king now conceded that all who had obtained such franchises from of old and had made use of them should enjoy them in peace, it is adjudged that the said Roger and the others should depart in peace with the said manor and liberties saving the right of the lord the king.

1293-1306.

In the year 1300 (28 Ed. I.), Sir Roger de Mortein appears to have been present with the king at the seige of Caerlaverock. In the Roll of Caerlaverock is an emblazonment of his coat of arms, and the following lines thus rendered into English by Mr. Thomas Wright:—"Then there was Roger de Mortaigne, who strives that he may acquire honour. He bore yellow, with six blue lions, the tails of which we say were double."

In the Perambulation Roll for 28 Ed. I. (1299-1300), it states that "Roger de Mortein and Margaret la Russe hold the vills of Blakeswych and Great Blockeswych, Shelfhull, Bermundescote, and Haworthyn, with the woods and wastes, in chief of our lord the king, afforested since the time above stated." Record Office.

In 33 Ed. I. (1304-5), we meet, for a second time, with the name of Sir Thomas Rouse the son of Margery, in a deed which makes mention of the fishery at Ladypool. Of Margery herself we have no further mention, and it seems probable that she died about this date.

In the 34th Ed. I. (1305-6), is a grant of two mills in the fee of Walshale, made to Henry de Walshale  
Chartulary.

1308-1314. — Prestwood, by Sir Roger Morteyn; and the year previously we find Sir Thos. Rouse granting to Sir Roger Morteyn "a certain road to the windmill of Walshale, for a cart and horses at pleasure," &c. The Windmill Lane still remains. Several other curious deeds relate to this time, but as they do not concern the manor, we shall notice them further on.

Waleshale  
Chartulary.

The next important deed bears date 2 Ed. II. (1308-9). It is a "grant by Roger de Morteyn and Thomas Ruffus, knights, lords of Walshale, to the burgesses of that place, for a certain sum of money, of freedom from all demands of tallage and pannage, together with various privileges for breaking the assize of beer, made between Christmas and the Purification, and at all times of fairs in Waleshale, according to ancient custom, with other liberties." This is a confirmatory grant of the privileges conferred on the town before by Sir William Ruffus.

5 Ed. II. (1311-2). A French deed of this date states that Roger Morteyn enfeoffed (or more properly perhaps mortgaged) Ralph Bassett of Drayton and his heirs, or John de Someri and his heirs, of his portion of the Manor of Walsale, with its appurtenances, for the sum of 300 livres. A copy of this agreement is contained in the Walsall Chartulary. This deed marks the first appearance of Ralph Bassett of Drayton, who subsequently acquired the whole of the manor.

See Pedigree,  
p. 47.

7 Ed. II. (1313-4). The Inquisition Rolls of this year state, "John de Someri has licence to acquire the fee of Walleshalle Manor and Dudley Castle." This John de Someri was the last of his line, and he died in 1321. He was Baron of Dudley, and completed the building of the castle, which had been demolished by Henry II., in consequence of Gervase Paganel having joined in the rebellion of young Henry against his father. John de Someri was a man of great physical strength, and was knighted by Edward I. He played a prominent part in the Scottish wars, being seven times personally engaged; and of him it is

reported that "he did so domineer in Staffordshire, that no man could enjoy the benefit of law and reason, taking upon him more authority than a king; that there was no abiding thereabouts unless they did bribe him, in contributing largely towards the building of his castle at Dudley." 1313-1321.  
—  
Twamley,  
"Hist. of Dud-  
ley Castle,"  
p. 10.

7 Ed. II. (1313-4). In this year a licence was granted by the king to John de Someri, to alienate (or grant) a moiety of the Manor of Walshale to Ralph Bassett of Drayton, for a sum of money. From the Rotuli Originalia (Record Office) we learn that "Ralph Bassett of Drayton made a fine with the king in a hundred shillings, for licence to acquire a moiety of the Manor of Walshale, of John de Somery," &c. Waleshale  
Chartulary.

9 Ed. II. (1315-6). The Nomina Villarum for Staffordshire of this year gives,

"Hondesworth, Bar Magna, Walshal,	}	JOHN DE SOMERYE, THOS. LE ROUS."
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Sir Thomas le Rouse was Sheriff of Staffordshire in the 9th and 10th Ed. II., is described as having been the King's Lieutenant, and his name is frequently met with as a knight of the county at this time. Close Rolls.

In 10 Ed. II. (1316-7), Sir Ralph Bassett obtains from the king a confirmation of the grant by Henry II. to Herbert Ruffus, of the Manor of Walshale. Waleshale  
Chartulary.

During the next few years there are many deeds relating to minor changes in land, &c., in Waleshale, in which the names of Sir Thos. Rouse and Richard Paynel are frequently met with. Ibid.

The Charter Rolls for 14 Ed. II. (1320-1), state that "the Prior of Chaucomb has the right of free warren at Caldewelle in the parish of Walsale." The Monastery of Chaucomb was in Northamptonshire, and Caldewell was given to the Prior by William de Boweles, of Rushall Hall. In connection with this we may notice a deed dated 3 Ed. II. (1309-10), in which Sir Roger Morteyn grants to Sir Thomas le Rouse a moiety of one of the fisheries in Walsale, towards Ibid.

1325-1339. — the grange of Calewenhull. This is the Caldewell (Calder Fields) just previously mentioned. It belonged to the Boweles family, who "bilte and repairede a mansion at Caldewalle, and made a moot abowte the seyde mansion, and there dwellide the seyde William and his wyf manye yeeris. And there deyde sire Hugh de Boweles," &c. The moat of the old house is still distinctly visible near Longwood Bridge.

Walsdale  
Chartulary. 19 Ed. II. (1325-6). In this year Roger Hillary, rector of the church of Allerwich (Aldridge), makes an agreement with Sir Thomas Rouse about his rent of 15s.4d., for lands and tenements held of him within the Manor of Walesdale. This, and subsequent deeds are interesting as showing that the Hillaries of Bescot held and maintained an interest in Walsall.

We now come (1338-9) to a period when, by various assurances and proceedings, Sir Ralph Bassett of Drayton, who had previously acquired Morteyn's moiety, completed his acquisition of the whole of the manor. The records are not fully preserved, and the chain of title is not clear. Copies of several of the documents are in the Walsall Chartulary, and the following curious specimen shewing the existence of bondsmen at this time may be found interesting:—

"Thomas le Rouse to all his free tenants and bondsmen in the town of Walsdale, greeting, know that I have given, granted, and by my charter (Chartulary 144b), confirmed to Mons Rauf Bassett, seigneur de Drayton and his heirs, the lands, rents, reversions, and services of freemen and bondsmen, which I have in the said town of Walsdale as is more plainly and fully contained in a charter in that respect made by me to him; wherefore we command and direct you that from henceforth, you acknowledge the said Mons Rauf and perform all your services, and be entirely subservient to him and to his heirs as you have been to me, and this shall be your warranty.

"12 Ed. III. Given at Drayton Bassett."

At the same time Sir Thomas also granted to Sir Ralph all his goods and chattels, his free and native tenants, and a rent of £30 from lands in co. Leicester.

Ralph Bassett,  
Justice of England  
Tomp Henry I.  
Sir Geoffrey Riddel=Govn,  
Founded Canwell.

Thurstino,  
S.P.

Richard Bassett=Maud.

Ralph Bassett=Folicia.

Sir Ralph Bassett=Margaret de Somery.  
d. at Evesham, 1205.

Sir Ralph Bassett,  
d. 27 Ed. I. (1278-9.)

Sir Ralph Bassett.

Thomas Beauchamp  
3 Earl of Warwick  
d. 1370.

Joanna = Sir Ralph Bassett, K.G.  
d. 17 Ed. III. (1343-4).  
Lord of Walsall 1330.

Ralph Bassett = Alice, dr. of  
d. 1333. Lord Audley.

Sir Ralph Bassett = Joanna, dr. of  
S.P. d. May, 1300. John Montfort,  
Duko of Bretegn.

Maud.

Margaret = Edmund Baron of Stafford

Ralph, E. of Stafford = Kathori

Hugh, E. of Stafford.

Ralph.

Richard.

William.

Edmund.

Richard.

Thomaa.  
S.P.

Humphrey 1st D. of Buckingham  
killed at battle of Northallerton

Humphrey = Margaret Beaumont,  
dr. of D. of Somerset.

d. before his father  
1453. Killed at St.  
Albans.

Henry, beheaded 1483.

Edward beheaded 1521.

1339.

— Margerie la Rouse left, by her husband John Paynel, a daughter Alice, who, it would seem, was married to John le Archer. The deeds show that Sir Ralph Bassett acquired the remaining portion of the manor, formerly held by Margery, and now represented by Alice le Archer.

In the following year, 13 Ed. III. (1339-40), he received the king's pardon for having obtained to himself a moiety of the Manor of Walshale, with the appurtenances of Alice l'Archer, held in capite, without previously gaining the royal licence. Given at Berkhamstead, 20th March, 1339. For this pardon he pays the sum of a hundred shillings, and a subsequent pardon and fine are thus described in the *Rotuli Originalia*:—"Ralph Bassett of Drayton, chivaler, makes a fine of 40s., for pardon for acquiring a moiety of the Manor of Walshale, with the appurtenances of Alice Lurcher," &c. Sir Ralph Bassett had now acquired the whole of the manor, save a small portion held, and afterwards retained, by the Hillari family of Bescot. It appears from the Charter Rolls that in 18 Ed. III. (1344-5), Roger Hillary, who was a Justice of the Common Pleas, obtained a grant of free warren over the Manor of Walshalle as well as over the adjoining Manor of Rushale.

From 1339, the names of le Rouse, Morteyn, Someri, and others disappear from the pages of our history.

Such are the main features of the descent of the manor to Sir Ralph Bassett, and from this time to the death of the last Lord Bassett, in 1390, it was held by this ancient house, of which we shall now offer a brief sketch.

The Bassetts of Drayton Bassett were a fine old family, and one of the most extensive in the county. In the reign of Henry I., a Ralph Bassett was Chief Justiciar of England. He is reputed to have made many good laws, and to have been the means whereby the Court of Exchequer was ordered to remain in one certain place. He was buried in the

Chapter house of Abingdon, and left behind him four sons, of whom Richard the second inherited Drayton. Drayton continued in the family for several generations, and in 12 Ed. III. (1338-9) was held by Sir Ralph Bassett, who, as we have seen, acquired about that date the Manor of Walsall. An ancestor of his, Sir Ralph Bassett, was killed at the battle of Evesham in 1265, fighting against the king. By the interest of Prince Edward the estate was continued to his widow Margaret de Somery, and from her passed to Ralph her son, who died 27 Ed. I. (1298-9), and was buried in the church at Drayton. He was succeeded by another Ralph (not mentioned by Shaw), whose son, Sir Ralph Bassett, became lord of Walsall in 1339. He married Joanna, daughter of Thomas Beauchamp, 3rd Earl of Warwick of that name.

1338-1355.

Shaw, v. ii, p. 5.

Erlswick,  
p. 308-9.

This Sir Ralph did not live long to enjoy his Manor of Walshale, for he died in 17 Ed. III. (1343-4). His son Ralph died before his father, in 1333, leaving a son, also Ralph, who, on the death of his grandfather, was a minor. This third Ralph was also last of his race, and died without issue, in the year 1390. His connection with Walsall Manor is very interesting. In 1343 his grandfather died, and the manor then came into the hands of the king, who granted the wardship of the youthful heir to Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick. On attaining his majority, the Earl, probably from interested motives, would not yield up the estate, and Ralph Bassett was obliged to sue out an inquisition. This was taken at Walesale, on May 8th, 1355 (29 Ed. III.), by John de Swinnerton, escheator of the king for the county of Stafford. The record runs as follows:—

Record Office.

**MANDATE** directed to John de Swynnerton, the King's Escheator in the county of Stafford, stating that Ralph Basset, of Drayton, kinsman and heir of Ralph Bassett, of Drayton, deceased, who held of the King in capite, asserts that he is of full age, and has prayed the King that the lands and tenements which are of his inheritance, and in the wardship of Thomas de Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, until the lawful age of the heir aforesaid, may be given up to him. The King wishes that the same Ralph, who was



1355.

born at Walshale, in the county aforesaid, and was baptized in the church of the same vill, as it is said, should prove his age before the same Escheator. The Escheator is, therefore, commanded, &c. Dated at Westminster, the 30th day of April, in the 29th year of the King's reign over England, and the 16th of his reign over France (A.D. 1355).

THE PROOF of age of Ralph Basset, kinsman and heir of Ralph Basset, of Drayton, deceased, who held of the King in capite, taken before John de Swinnerton, Escheator of the Lord the King in the county of Stafford, of Walesale, on the 8th day of May, in the 29th year of the reign of King Edward the III. after the Conquest; according to the tenor of a writ of the Lord the King, to this proof sued, by the oath of the underwritten, viz:—

JOHN DE OLDYNTON, of the age of 50 years and upwards, sworn and diligently examined, touching the age of the aforesaid Ralph, who says that the same Ralph was of the age of 21 years on the last day of November last year, because he was born at Walshale, and baptized in the church of the same vill, in the last day of November, in the 7th year of the reign of the now King Edward. It being demanded of him how he knows this, he says, that on the said day of the birth of the said Ralph, he announced the birth of the same Ralph to Thomas, then Abbot of Hales Oweyn; and that the same Abbot should have come to Walshale, because he was to be the godfather of the same Ralph, which same Abbot did so then come, by which he well recollects that he is of full age.

CLEMENT DE WYLLESTON, of the age of 54 years and upwards, sworn and diligently examined concerning the age of the aforesaid Ralph, agrees with the aforesaid person sworn, touching the year, day and place. It being demanded of him how he knows this, he says on the day of the birth of the said Ralph, the same Clement was in the service of Thomas de Rous, Chivaler, who likewise was then godfather of the said Ralph; through which it sufficiently recurs to his memory that he is of full age.

THOMAS ATTE BROKE, of the age of 46 years and upwards, sworn and diligently examined touching the age of the aforesaid Ralph, agrees with the aforesaid persons sworn, touching the year, day, and place. It being demanded of him how he knows this, he says that John, his first-born son, was born on the Feast of St. Nicholas Bishop, next following after the birth of the aforesaid Ralph; which same John, his son, has been reputed as coetaneous with the same Ralph, up to the present time, through which circumstances he well remembers the age aforesaid.

HUGH DE RYDARE, of the age of 44 years and upwards, and ROBERT DE YELBRUGGE, of 50 years; sworn and separately examined touching the age of the aforesaid Ralph, agree with the aforesaid persons sworn concerning the year, day, and place. It being asked of them how they know this, they say that on the morrow of the conception of the Blessed Mary next after the birth of the aforesaid Ralph, they proved the will of John, son of the aforesaid Hugh, whose executors they were, and by the same will they can sufficiently show the truth of the age aforesaid.

WILLIAM LE SWAYN, of the age of 60 years and upwards, sworn and diligently examined touching the age of the aforesaid Ralph, agrees with the aforesaid persons sworn touching the year, day, and place. He, being asked how he knows this, says that at the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Mary next after the birth of the said Ralph, he set out on his way towards St. James, by which he well recollects the age aforesaid, and that he is of full age.

1355.  
—

JOHN LYON, of the age of 48 years, THOMAS ATTE CHIRCHERYD, of the age of 53 years, sworn and separately examined touching the age of the aforesaid Ralph, agree with the aforesaid persons sworn, touching the year, day, and place. They being asked how they knew this, they say that the aforesaid William le Sweyn, at the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord next after the birth of the said Ralph, before he thus set out on his pilgrimage enfeoffed John de Stoke, chaplain, with all his lands and tenements in Walshale, and the same John and Thomas were witnesses in the Charter so made; and by the date of the said Charter they can sufficiently show the truth that he is of full age.

RICHARD JONES, of the age of 60 years, sworn and diligently examined touching the age of the aforesaid Ralph, agrees with the aforesaid persons sworn, touching the year, day, and place. He being asked how he knows this, he says, that on Monday next after Feast of the Epiphany next after the birth of the said Ralph, the same Richard took to wife Alicia, daughter of John Sampson; through which it well recurs to his memory that he is of full age.

JOHN DE HURSTE, of the age of 50 years, and JOHN IN LE GREVE of the age of 60 years, sworn and separately examined touching the age of the aforesaid Ralph, agree with the aforesaid persons sworn, touching the year, day, and place. They being asked how they know this, they say, that on the said day of his birth, they were present together, and saw the said Ralph then borne to the Church of Walshale, and there baptized, and carried back from the same unto the Manor of Walshale, with singers, and a great crowd of people, giving praises to God for the birth of the said Ralph . . . show the truth that he is of full age.

The above record not only decides the fact of Sir Ralph Bassett having been born here, but it also states that Sir Thomas Rouse was his godfather, while the expression "carried back from the church to the Manor of Walsale," shews that a manor house existed at that time, and that it was at least occasionally used as the residence of the lord.

This Sir Ralph was Baron of Drayton, and was a Knight of the Garter. He confirmed the charter of Geva, daughter of Hugh, Earl of Chester, to the monks of Canwell, In 1355, making proof of his Shaw, v. ii.

1359-1391. — age, and doing his homage, he had livery of his lands, and in the same year went into Gascony, and again in 33 Ed. III. (1359-60). In 34 Ed. III. he served his king in the wars of France and Normandy, and the following year travelled into the Holy Land. In 39 Ed. III. (1365-6), he went again into Gascony, and was of the retinue of Prince Edward, in his army in those parts. He obtained a prestige in the wars of that time, and in 4 Rich. II. (1380-1), was with the Earl of Buckingham in France, with 200 men-at-arms and 200 archers, and rode with his banner displayed. He married Joanna, daughter of John Montfort, Duke of Bretegn.

Dugdale's  
"Baronage."

Harwood's  
"Lichfield,"  
pp. 54, 94.

This Lord Bassett is reputed to have slain a wild boar on Bassett's Heath. He died without issue in 14 Rich. II. (1390-91), and was buried under a monument in Lichfield Cathedral, which was destroyed during the Civil War. A plate of this tomb is preserved in Shaw's History, and represents an image in complete armour, with gauntlets upon the erected hands. On the head, which rested on the helm and crest, was a steel cap, and on his shoulder a square shield of his arms. His dagger was on his right side, and his feet rested upon a boar, his crest. The tomb was surrounded by compartments, containing the arms of his family and its connections. For the yearly keeping of his obit he left by will 200 marks to the altar of St. Nicholas, Lichfield. He also left certain houses in Walsall for augmenting the convent of Canwell with five more monks, and to find one priest perpetually to pray for his soul and the souls of his ancestors, at the altar of St. Nicholas, and keeping his obit with certain lights, as also to make a wall towards the water, and a new belfry. Another clause in the will desires that "whoever should first bear his surname and arms should have his great velvet bed for life." After the death of Lord Bassett, without issue, there appears to have been considerable difficulty in the disposal of his estates.

A fine made in the 13th Ed. III. (1339-40),

between Ralph Bassett and Thomas, 3rd Earl of Warwick, shows that the Manor of Walesale had been given as a dowry to Joanna, daughter of the said Earl, on her marriage with the son of Sir Ralph Bassett. In case of Ralph and Joanna dying childless, the manor was to descend to two scions of the family of Stafford, or failing their issue, to Thomas, 4th Earl of Warwick, the brother of Joanna.

1339-1396.  
Feet of Fines  
13 Ed. III.

An Inquisition taken in 14 Rich. II. (1390-91), shows that Ralph Bassett was lord of Walesale, and that Thomas, Earl of Stafford, and Alice=Chaworth were found to be his cousins and next heirs. Whether Lord Stafford possessed the whole manor, or only a portion, is uncertain, as, by an Inquisition taken after his death, in 15 Rich. II. (1391-2), we find that he was seised of "one piece of land of wood and pasture one carucate of land and park called le Wastes and le Conyngre in a part of Walesale called Clayhanger." This property remained in the hands of the Staffords for several generations. The manor itself came into possession of Thomas Beauchamp, 4th Earl, who was lord here in 19 Rich. II. (1395-6).

Shaw, v. ii, p. 5

Inq. Post  
Mortem.

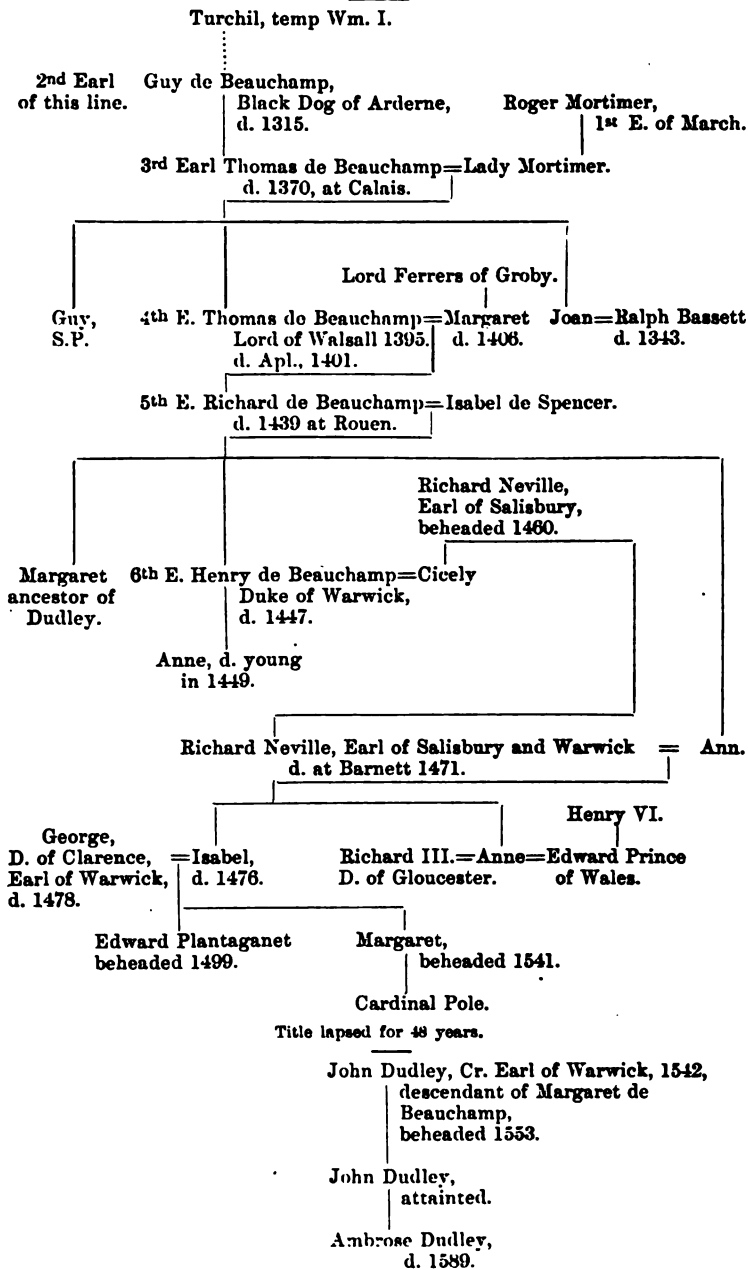
The records of the borough during the lordship of the Bassetts are very scanty and devoid of much special interest. Some of them will be afterwards noticed in the General History of the Town.

For over a century the manor remained in the hands of the great family of Warwick, save when for short periods it was escheated to the Crown. Their famous crest "the bear and ragged staff" still remains among us, recalling many a tradition and knightly deed. Among their possessions in this neighbourhood may be named Great Barr, Perry Barr, Sutton Chase and Town, and Shenstone.

Our notice of the Warwick family may fairly commence with Thomas Beauchamp, the 3rd Earl of that line, and son of Guy, called the Black Dog of Arderne. He was a soldier by profession, and played a prominent part in the Scotch, Welsh, and French wars of that time.

Dugdale's  
"Warwick-  
shire."

# PEDIGREE OF WARWICK FAMILY.



In the 18 Ed. III. (1344-5), he was made Marshal of England, and two years later attended the king in his French expedition, and won honours under the command of the Black Prince at Cressy and Poitiers. He afterwards spent three years in an expedition to the Holy Land, and on his return home went to the assistance of the English Army, which lay in a critical position before Calais. His efforts were crowned with success, but he unfortunately fell a victim to the plague then raging there, and died in 1370. He married Lady Catherine Mortimer, by whom it is said he had seven sons and nine daughters. One of the latter, Joanna, married Ralph Bassett, who became lord of Walsall. This earl was named Bold Beauchamp, for having in 1346 with one squire and six archers defeated one hundred Normans. He was buried in the choir of St. Mary's Church, Warwick, where his tomb, with effigies of himself and his wife, is still to be seen. This tomb is notable as being, according to Gough, one of the most elegant and beautiful of its kind in the kingdom. Of his seven sons, Guy the eldest died before his father, and Thomas de Beauchamp the second son succeeded to the earldom and estates, becoming lord of Walsall in or about the year 1395, by virtue of the fine already mentioned. In 29 Ed. III. (1355-6), he was created a knight, and had 100 marks granted out of the Exchequer, until other provision should be made for his support. On Feb. 7th, 44 Ed. III. (1370), he did homage for his lands, upon the death of his father, being then of the age of 24. This Earl Thomas was also a military man, and was retained by Indenture to serve the king in his wars, and this he did by raising the siege of Rockhill, and by aiding John Duke of Montfort in Brittany. During the minority of Richard II., he was elected by Parliament 3 Rich. II. (1379-80), to be the governour of the young king. On Richard ascending the throne he cast away the services of many of his great officers and counsellors, among whom was the Earl of Warwick.

1344-1380.

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Page 75.

- 1393-1396. This nobleman retired to Warwick, and employed his leisure in improving the castle, in building Guy's tower, and in completing the body of the church of St. Mary in 1393, together with many other pious works of the same description. In July, 1397, he with other great men was seized and taken prisoner to London, when he had sentence of death passed upon him (Sept. 28), which, however, was commuted to perpetual banishment to the Isle of Man, while his estates were given to Thomas Holland, Earl of Kent. The Manor of Walsall escheated to the Crown, and was given the same year, together with fairs, markets, free warren, and all liberties, to John Beaufort, Earl of Somerest, who was created Marquis of Dorset. This nobleman also received Perry Barr, Drayton, and Hampstead. The Earl of Warwick was removed to the Tower of London, where, however, he did not stay long, for on the death of Richard II. in 1399, he was immediately restored to his full liberty, honours, and possessions. He died on April 8th, 1401, and was buried in St. Mary's Church with Margaret his Countess, under a splendid monument, destroyed in the great fire of 1694. His testament bears date at Warwick Castle, April 1st, 1400 (1 Henry IV.), and by it he left to every town of which he was lord or patron of the church 20s. in money. This was the earl who sent down his "servants and counsellors Thomas Knyght, parson of the church of Hanslape, surveiours of the lands of the sayd earle; John Hugforde and William Spernors, squyers, to his towne and lordship of Walshale for the oversyght and good governance of the sayd towne and lordship." This curious old record, still preserved in the Walsall Chartulary, and dated 19 Rich. II. (1395-6), details how "Jenkyn Cole, of my lordes mylle at Walshale," complains that the burgesses of the town would not grind their corn at his 'mylle,' but took it away to 'Ruysshale mylne' (Butts) and divers other mills in the country, and how the burgesses and tenants are summoned before the Commissioners, and after
- Dugdale, p. 288.
- Charter Rolls.

being examined are freed from blame, and Jenkyn : Cole is advised to try by the aid of a more cunning miller to regain their goodwill.

The situation of this old mill has already been stated (p. 63), and a deed dated 2 Ed. II. contains the singular proviso that the grantee shall grind at the lord's mill for 20 years, and not longer. It was the property of the lord of the manor, and was removed about 1813. The Corporation still pay a <sup>Glew,</sup> nominal rental of two shillings per annum as an acknowledgement.

A grant at this time is of significance as showing a favourable concession from the king to his lately injured earl. It is a confirmation of a grant to the men of the Manor of Walshale, and is dated at Westminster, October 6th, I Henry IV. (1399.) It permits <sup>Cal. c  
Dec</sup> the men of the manor to be quit of all Toll for their goods, &c., throughout England, according to the custom of the realm, as appeared by a certificate of <sup>Paten  
47 E</sup> King Ed. III., grandfather of the said Henry, &c. The charter states that, by a custom long approved, men of ancient demesne were exempt from such payment, and declares that Walshale being "de antiquo dominico Coronæ Angliæ," the men of the manor should be free therefrom. An exemption of this kind was not an uncommon privilege, and was enjoyed by Coventry, Wednesbury, and many other towns.

The Patent Rolls record that about this time some grievances were settled between the community of the town of Tamworth on the one part, and the community of the town of Walsale on the other, "by reason of the levying of toll," &c.

Thomas de Beauchamp died in 1401, and an Inquisition taken after his death records that he was <sup>Inq. 1  
Mor</sup> seised of the Manor of Walsall. His widow Margaret retained a third part of the manor, the advowson of the church and a tenement there called Clayhanger, which had been in the possession of William, brother and heir of Thomas, Earl of Stafford. From William <sup>Ibid.</sup> it passed to Edward, Earl of Stafford, who died



1402-1418.

Coram Rege  
Roll.

4 Henry IV. (1402-3), holding in Walshale a tenement called Clayhanger and the Wastes lying between the town and park of Walshale, and one carucate and a half of land in Walshale park. This property afterwards became the subject of an enquiry, and there remains a record of a "finding by a jury that Edmund, late Earl of Stafford, was not seised of land within the vill and park of Walsall, called 'le Wastes' and 'le Conger'" 10 Henry IV. (1408-9). Eventually the land came into the hands of Margaret, who died 8 Henry IV. (1406-7.)

We may also note that at this time, 4 Henry IV. (1402-3), Sir Roger Hillary held lands of Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, at Bescot and Bloxwich. The Patent Roll of the following year states that the king confirmed to Thomas Gorges, son and heir of Theobald Gorges, in fee the market, fair, and free warren of Walshale, as was conceded to Elena de Gorges in 19 chart. of Ed. I.

Dugdale,  
"Warwick-  
shire."

Thomas de Beauchamp was succeeded by his only son Richard, one of the most haughty and noble of his race. At the coronation of Henry IV., he was created a knight of the Bath. He won honours in the foreign wars, and overcame in combat the most renowned champions of Europe, whilst his private conduct was as estimable as his public career was illustrious. The Emperor Sigismund distinguished him as "the father of courtesy," and the king entrusted him with the tutelage of his son Henry V. He filled the high office of Regent of France, and died at the castle of Rouen in 17 Henry V. (1438-9), holding among his numerous possessions the Manor of Walsall. He married Isabel de Spencer, who survived him and held the manor until her death in the following year. This earl built the Beauchamp Chapel at Warwick, where he was buried under a tomb, considered, with the single exception of that of Henry VII. at Westminster, to be the most splendid in the kingdom.

The Charter Roll for 5 Henry V. (1417-8) states

that Richard de Bello Campo, Earl of Warwick, 1445-1449.  
 “may have one market every week on Tuesday within  
 the vill of Walshale and two fairs there every year,  
 one on the feast of St. John before the Latin Gate  
 and the other on the feast of SS. Simon and Jude,  
 unless to the hindrance of neighbouring markets  
 and fairs,” &c.

Richard Beauchamp left a son, Henry, the last  
 of his line, heir to vast estates, and among them the  
 Manor of Walshale. With Henry VI. he was a great  
 favourite, was created premier Earl of England, then  
 Duke of Warwick, and finally King of the Isle of Man, Dugdale,  
 “Warwick-  
 shire.”  
 being invested with this latter honour by the king  
 himself. He was married before attaining the age  
 of 10 years, to Cicely, daughter of Richard Neville,  
 Earl of Salisbury, by whom he left an only daughter,  
 Anne, who died shortly after her father, in 1449. At  
 the age of 22 he died, and was buried at Tewkesbury  
 in 1445. This same year the king, “being desirous  
 for certain causes to be informed whether the town  
 of Walsall in the county of Stafford be of ancient  
 demesne of our Crown of England,” issued a writ to Patent Rolls.  
 his Chamberlain and Treasurer to inspect the Domesday  
 Survey for that purpose. These latter state that “they  
 have examined the book of Domesday and found  
 nothing; and there is nothing in the same book  
 inserted under the heading ‘lands of the king,’  
 touching the town of Walsall.” What led to this  
 enquiry is unknown, but the manor seems to have  
 been leased off to Sir Wm. Lychfeld, and John, Duke Inq. Post  
 Mortem.  
 of Somerset, who received the rents and issues.

On the death of his daughter in 1449, Warwick’s  
 estates, including Walshale, reverted to his own sister  
 Anne, wife of Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury,  
 who afterwards proved one of the most remarkable  
 figures in the history of the 15th century. He was  
 known as the Stout Earl, or the King Maker, from  
 the prominence he took in the Wars of the Roses. He  
 was born in 1420, and from his early bravery and  
 distinguished qualities, as well as by his marriage with

1449-1471. Anne, daughter and heiress of Richard de Beauchamp, he became the most powerful nobleman in the kingdom. On the death of Anne de Beauchamp, in 1449, he was created Earl of Warwick, with succession to the heirs of his wife. The character and attributes of this great man have been made familiar to us by the genius of Shakespeare; his regal munificence and hospitality have been sketched by Hume, while in the constant struggles between the rival houses of York and Lancaster, his enormous wealth, coupled with the power of his name, was the means of ensuring success to whichever side he befriended.

Hume.

Baronage, v. ii,  
p. 306.

This is the earl who is said to have entertained no less than 30,000 people daily at his board and at the different manors and castles on his estates, whose army of retainers "were more devoted to his will than to the Prince or the laws," and whom Lord Lytton has so finely portrayed as "The Last of the Barons." Dugdale says that "at his house in Warwick Lane, London, were lodged 600 men, all in red jackets, embroidered with ragged staves before and behind; six oxen were usually eaten at a breakfast, and every tavern was full of his meat, for who that had any acquaintance in his family, should have as much sodden and roast as he might carry on a long dagger." This great man fell on the field of Barnet, in 1471, his "glory smeared in dust and blood." His body was carried to London, with that of the Marquis of Montacute, his brother, and exposed to public view before St. Paul's. He was afterwards buried at Bisham, in Berks, leaving two daughters, Isabel and Ann; the former married to George Duke of Clarence, while Ann married, first Edward Prince of Wales, and secondly Richard Duke of Gloucester, afterwards King Richard III. The name of Richard Neville appears only once among the deeds of the town, in a lease which relates to "certain lands at Bascote."

Calendar of  
Deeds, 66.

On the death of her husband, the Countess of Warwick sank into a condition of the greatest trouble and poverty, and sought a refuge, first in the Abbey

of Beaulieu, in Hampshire, and afterwards in the north of England, where she "liv'd privately and endured many straights." By Act of Parliament 14 Ed. IV. (1474-5), she was deprived of her vast inheritance, and her estates were divided and settled upon her two daughters, "as if the Countess had been naturally dead."

1474-1483.

Rolls of Parliament.

The Manor of Walshale fell to the portion of Isabel, who, at the age of eighteen, had married George Duke of Clarence, who was created Earl of Warwick in 1472 by his brother Edward IV. In 1476, Isabel fell a victim to the ambition of the Duke of Gloucester, dying, as it is said, of poison, while the Duke, her husband, was committed to the Tower and attainted by Parliament of high treason. Being convicted, he was murdered there on February 7th, 16 Ed. IV. (1476-7), drowned, as legend relates, in a butt of Malmsey wine.

The Manor of Walshale seems to have escheated to the Crown as by Letters Patent granted by Ed. IV. at this time, Humphrey Stanley was appointed "Ranger of the Forest of Cank, and Steward of our Town of Walsall, and of the office of Parker of our Park of Walsall."

In the Harleian MS., is another deed relating to the Lordship of Walsale: "Touching the keeping of the Parc there with the herbage of the same graunted to John Wirley, 21st May, 1 Ed. V." (1483.)

Upon the death of Clarence, his son, Edward Plantagenet, succeeded to the title and estates of the Earl of Warwick. This unfortunate nobleman was born either at Warwick Castle, where his mother died, or on shipboard when his father flew to Calais. He was knighted at York by Richard III., in the 1st Rich. III. (1483-4.) At the age of eight he was committed prisoner to the castle of Sheriff Hutton, Yorks, by Rich. III. He was moved to the tower immediately after the battle of Bosworth, August 21st, 1485.

Pict. Hist., v. ii, p. 281.

In the Calendar of Deeds is one dated May 3rd, 3 Henry VII. (1487-8), and signed by this earl, or at

Calendar of Deeds, 78.

1409.

Dugdale,  
"Warwick-  
shire," p. 74.

all events on his behalf by Edward Grey Viscount L'Isle. It is a lease of land at Bascote. Lord L'Isle, who signs this deed, was Edward Grey of Groby, but by right of his wife Elizabeth was created Lord L'Isle by Ed. IV., and Viscount de L'Isle on June 21st, 1 Rich. III. by that king. He was related to the Earls of Warwick by ties both of service and of blood, for Astley was one of their manors, and Thomas Astley his ancestor had (tempo Ed. II.) married Elizabeth daughter of Guy de Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick. This Lord Edward was in 4 Henry VII. (1488-9), assigned as a commissioner for choosing archers in the county of Warwick, for the relief of the Duchy of Brittany. He died in 1492, and was buried at Astley Church.

Pict. Hist., v. II,  
p. 310.

In July, 1499, it was rumoured that the Earl of Warwick had entered into a conspiracy with Perkin Warbeck, with whom he was imprisoned, to escape from the tower and get up an insurrection with the view of placing the latter on the throne as Richard IV. Warwick was brought to trial, not before the judges, but before his peers, and having pleaded guilty to the charge, he was on November 24th, three days after the trial, beheaded on Tower Hill. He died seized of lands, but according to Dugdale not of Walsall Manor, which as we shall see had been for some years in the possession of the Crown. Thus fell the last of the Plantagenets, a line which had flourished in great royalty and renown from the time of King Henry II.

Rolls of Parlia-  
ment.

Shortly after the accession of Henry VII., a rent charge of £4 of fee farm in Walsall was assigned to Thomas Earl of Derby. Richard Stapull was appointed to the office of keeper of the park and of the bayllyship of the foreign, and to Sir Humphrey Stanley was secured a re-grant of the office of keeper of the park with its herbage and pannage and the stewardship of the town. Thomas Stanley had married Eleanor daughter of Richard Neville, and afterwards Margaret Beaufort. At the coronation of his stepson Henry VII.,

he was raised to the dignity of Earl of Derby. With his kinsman, Sir Humphrey, we shall meet later on. 1488.  
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We pass now back to Anne, the Countess of Warwick, whose lands had been confiscated in 14 Ed. IV. (1474-5), and who had wandered poor and penniless to the north of England; or, according to another authority, had been kept in prison during his life by the king Rich. III. In 4th Henry VII. (1488), that king "having a minde thereto, her said daughters being both dead; by a new Act of Parliament annulled the former as against all reason, conscience, and course of nature, and contrary to the laws of God and man." She thus recovered possession of her forfeited estates, but it would appear that the real object of the king was to gain them for himself, as she ultimately conveyed the whole of them to him with remainder to his issue male. Out of her dower, which consisted of 118 lordships and other lands, and which comprised in this neighbourhood the Manor of Walsall, Perry Barr, Pattingham, Shenstone, and Sutton, the king only assigned the latter manor for her support. Sanders, "Hist  
of Shenstone,"  
p. 309.

By a special agreement made (December 13th, 1488), the Manor of Walshale was conveyed by her wholly to the king and entailed upon the issue male of his body reserving the remainder to herself and her heirs. Dugdale,  
"Warwick-  
shire."

Thus in 1488 Henry VII. again became lord of this manor. The Countess of Warwick was living in 5th Henry VII., but when she died still remains a mystery.

The lordship of the Warwick family extended over nearly a century, but there is no record of their ever having paid a visit to this part of their domain or of ever taking much interest in the town or its fortunes. They seem to have had a great esteem for the adjoining manor and chase of Sutton, where they had "a very goodly manor house with fair pools near it," and from whence they hunted the surrounding country.

1488-1501.  
Patent Rolls.

In 17 Ed. I. (1288-9), we find the then Earl William de Beauchamp obtaining a special patent from the king, that during his life he might have free liberty to follow and pursue such of his deer as being hunted within this chase fled into the forest of Cank, and there to kill and bring them away without any disturbance from the said king's verderers or other officers of the forest.

Hist. of Sutton,  
p. 41. An entry in the will of the first Lord Thomas de Beauchamp is of interest. He leaves to "Sutton Church and all other churches on his lordships, the best beast that could be found on the manor in lieu of tithes forgotten."

Walsall still retains the "bear and ragged staff," the coat of arms of this family, and an Inn in the town is still known by this famous badge. The windows of the old church once bore some of their shields and arms, while the names of Warwick Street and Warwick Fields, serve to keep alive the memory of their once powerful rule.

Henry VII. was now (1488) lord of the manor, with succession to his heirs male, and the remainder to the Countess of Warwick and her heirs. As already stated the latter clause pretty clearly indicates that some pressure was used on the part of the king to acquire the estate in a plausible way for himself and his successors, a mode of acquisition by no means uncommon in those days.

Calendar of  
Deeds, p. 40.

In the 16 Henry VII. (1500-1), Thomas Goodman, the overseer for the king of the Warwick estates, grants a lease to Richard Hopkins, the then Mayor, and others, of the town or borough of Walsall, with all rents, escheats, forfeitures, &c., for an annual rent of £10; reserving to the king's use four tenements in the said borough, and a water mill and pond called "town myll, two crofts, &c." There has been considerable discussion as to the date of this deed, which is put down in the Calendar of Deeds as 16 Henry VI. The question is now set at rest by the Sneyd Roll, which gives the name of Richard Hopkins

as Mayor for this year. As lord of the manor, the king also granted at this time certain lands at Clayhanger and Bentley Lawnd, which are described as then being waste, to Edward Stafford, Duke of Buckingham. These lands now form part of the manor; then they lay outside of it. They were a regrant of the lands formerly held by the Earls of Stafford, called "Les Wastes," &c. 1505-1523.  
Shaw, v. ii,  
p. 72.

By a lease dated 21 Henry VII. (1505-6), the king grants "to John Dyson (serviens ejusdem regis) the Manor of the Foreign of Walsall, and all burgages, lands, &c., as well in the Boro' as in the Foreign; and all mills, &c., courts leet, &c., and all lands, &c., which Roger Dore and Martin Ardern had then lately held (wardships, marriages, reliefs, advowsons, and escheats excepted) for his life. Rent £34 old rent, and £6 of increase." Exchequer  
Rolls.

Henry VIII. next became lord as heir to his father, and the Exchequer Rolls contain various entries relating to the manor at this time. It appears that John Dyson surrenders his tenancy, and the king, 1 Henry VIII. (1509-10), makes a grant "to Robert Riston of the office of bailiff of the lordship of Walsall and of the keeping of the park there. Also of the farm of the aforesaid manor, called the King's Manor of the Foren, Walsall."

Two years afterwards, 3 Henry VIII., we find another grant to Robert Riston and William Gower of the "king's manour, which came to the hands of King Henry VIII., by reason of a fine between him and Anne, late Countess of Warwick. A rent which the king's grandmother, the Countess of Richmond, had been entitled to of £4 per annum, and which descended to her heirs, should not be required from Riston and Gower." A second document grants to Riston and Gower, the offices of bailiff of the manor and keeper of the Park, at a salary of £6 1s. 8d. per annum. Exchequer  
Rolls.

After holding the estate for fifteen years, the king leased it off on February 13th, 15 Henry VIII.



1523-1529. (1523), to Robert Acton and William Gower, two grooms of the king's bed chamber, reserving to himself the sum of £40 yearly rent.

This Robert Acton was the representative of an old Saxon family, whose descendants still reside at Wolverton Hall, in the parish of Stoulton, near Worcester. He is reputed to have been a great favourite with his royal master, and to have benefited greatly by the forfeited estate of the monastery of Evesham. In the wainscotted parlour of Wolverton Hall, is still preserved a brass plate with an inscription relating to coats of arms given to "Mastere Robarde Acton by ye kynge Henrye VIII."

In the State Papers of this period we find several entries relating to this Robert Acton.

State Papers,  
Henry VIII.,  
v. vi, p. 57.

15 Henry VIII. (1523). "Robert Acton, groom of the chamber, and William Gower, page of the chamber, to be bailiffs in survivorship of the Manor and Park of Walsall Foren, Staff., which came into the hands of Henry VII., by fine levied against Anne, late Countess of Warwick, vice Robert Riston deceased and the said William." Also a grant of the above manor on surrender by John Dyson. Westminster, February 13th, 15 Henry VIII.

Ibid, p. 901.

18 Henry VIII. (1526-7). "Robert Acton lease of lands in the Manor of Walsall, called the "Wastes," parcel of the Manor of Stafford, forfeited by Edward, late Duke of Buckingham, with reservations, for 21 years, rent £2 6s. 8d. and 3s.4d. increase."

Ibid, v. v, p. 176.

The following deed further explains the course of events:—

"July, 21 Henry VIII (1529). Grant to Henry Lord Stafford of reversion of the parcels of lands and pasture in the foren of the Manor of Walsall, called "le Wasts," parcel of the rent of the said Manor of Stafford, which was leased by patent 2 May 18 Henry VIII. (1526), to Robert Acton (afterwards one of the gentlemen ushers of the king's chamber), for 21 years, at an annual rent of £2 6s. 8d., and 3s.4d. of increase, which annual rent during the term of the said lease, along with a reversion of the premises on the expiration of the same was granted in tail male to the said Robert and

Margery his wife by patent 5 May 20 Henry VIII. (1528), to hold to the said Henry on the death of the said Robert and Margery and of the heirs male of their bodies at the annual rent of 50s."

1528.

Robert Acton seems to have acquired the share of Mr. Gower (of whom little trace is to be found), and on December 14th 20 Henry VIII. (1528), he granted to Walter Devereux, Lord Ferrers of Chartley, the parkship of Walsall, with all manner of herbage, pannage, pools, waters, fisheries, &c., for £11 13s. 4d. a year.

Shaw, v. ii, p. 72

A brief notice of this parkship may fitly be given at this stage, as just previously to this time it had been the source of considerable trouble to its owner. A royal park had existed here from a very early period, and was doubtless used for hunting purposes by the Norman Kings. Thus in 1206 and 1207 it is recorded that King John held great hunting meetings in this neighbourhood, and lodged at the monastery of Lady Wulfruna; and also that in 1247 Geoffrey de Bakepuze held here the park within the forest. It is interesting to note that the land lying between the Bloxwich Road and Harden is still called "the Forest."

Lawley, "Hist  
of Wolver-  
hampton."

Leland, who visited the town about 1540, mentions Waulleshal Parke, which he says lies "scant half a mile from the Towne yn the way to Wolnerhampton." The extent of the park at that time was from the top of Park Street (along the left side of the way leading to Wolverhampton) to Bentley, where Parkbrook still marks the boundary. Southward it covered the ground where the Workhouse and Bridgeman Street stand; westwards it reached as far as the Pleck and James Bridge. The Parks Farm is an indicative name, and the Moat, as is proved by a later deed, marks the site of the ancient manor house within the demesne. In the time of Henry VIII. the park abounded with deer and timber, and within memory the remains of many old oaks have been found within its precincts. A document at one time in the Public Record Office sheds a significant

Vol. vii, p. 20.

1524.

light on the state of society at that time. It was entitled:—

Walsall Note  
Book, p. 174.

"THE EFFECT OF THE BILL IN STARRE CHAMBER 'GAYNSTE  
BAYARD AND HIS COLTES."

"In the 16th yeare of King Henry the 8th, his raigne, one Robert Acton, Squire, one of the Groomes of the Kinge's Chamber, preferred a bill into the Starre Chamber against one Richard Hopkyns, Richard Bingley, and Nich: Woodward of Walsale, wherein hee shewed that whereas hee being possessed of the King's Manor of Walsale for his lyfe, by virtue of the King's Letters Patent. They three being wilful and obstinate persons, having wrongfully withhelde from him, and so had don a long time from the Kinge, divers parcells of Land and divers yeerly Rents, Custumes, and Servises, payinge nothing therefor to the Kinge, ne to hym the Patentee and Fermor of the sayd Manor; and had mainteyned the King's Bondmen regardant to the sayed Manor, and doe say and affirm, that they bee free; and have cutt down great Timber Trees in Walsale Parke. That they and other misdemened persones have hunted as well by nighte as by day in the Parke, and killed divers of the King's Deere: wherewith hee the sayd Robert Acton, not being contented, hath often required them to forbear, and required them to paye the yearely custumes, rentes, and servises, which belonged to their tenures, or els he would noe longer suffer them in theyre evyl doinges, but would complain to the Kinge. Whereupon the sayd Hopkins, Bingley, and Woodward, openly sayd to the sayd Robert Hacton, that if he would not suffer them to doe as they had done in times past, they would raise Bayard of Walsale, with his thousand Colts, and sett and appoint foure hundred men to revenge their quarrels upon him; and that they would ring Bayard's Bell, so that all the Town of Walsale should arise forthwith by the meanes thereof, whether the matter were right or wronge. And showed that the inhabitants of the sayd Town were light persons suddenly moved to affrays and insurrections (as was well known). And the rather because Bayard and his thousand Colts being great Clubbes, and have bin of longe time sett and hanged up on highe in the Town Halle of Walsale, and there beene taken and reputed in as much honour and worshipp as they were saincts in the churche; and bee at certain times in the yeare solemnly borne about the Towne in great reverence; which thing to be suffered is a great abomination, and the worst example for the maintenance of evyl rule within the sayd Towne that can be devised. And for that the sayd evyl and disordered persons intend to be borne and maintained in their ungracious actes and quarrels by them daylie done, they have a certaine boxe called Bayard's Boxe, in which be great sums of money purposely for the same Boxe gathered, to meyntaine theyre evyl doings any demeanours in the premises, &c. Then sheweth that they three and eight others more ryotously assembled and forcibly entered into a mill, parcel of the said Manor, &c. And desired "subpœnas" against Hopkins, Dingley,

and Woodward, and a commission to be directed to certain worshipful persons, as well to enquire of certain ryotts lately committed within the said Town of Walsale, by the ringyng of Bayard's Bell by the said Bingley, Hopkins, Woodward, and other evyl disposed persons, upon one John Cootes and John Stanley Esquires, of the County of Stafford, which they do entend to maintaine by the custome belonging to Bayard and his colts, &c., and also for the withdraweinge his yearly rents, customes, and services, bondmen, and the wrongful occupyings of the King's lands, parcell of the said Manor, and of the sayd wast, huntunge, and of all other articles and matters in the Bill specified, with all other causes and matters that shall be shewed and alledged for the King before the said Commissioners." 1524-1540.

The crime of deer stealing was at that time very severely punished, although not as in former days by death. Members of Parliament were allowed the privilege of killing a deer, and they were obliged to signal their intention of so doing by three blasts on a horn for the information of the forester. The Bayard of this document is probably an allusion to the famous French chevalier of that day, the Knight "sans peur et sans reproche," who was then at the height of his fame and was the popular champion of military virtue and justice.

The Burgess Box will be afterwards found mentioned in the Sneyd Roll, and a curious "Code of Laws" of the 15th century. Mr. Phipson Beale suggests that it was the embryonic form of the "Borough Fund." According to Mr. Gillespie, the "Burgess Bell" was a well-known expression; most towns possessed one, and it was sometimes called the "Moot Bell."

By the Coltes are meant the ancient wooden staves or "clubbes," some of which are still preserved in the Guildhall. They were carved in various fanciful designs representing the heads of females and of animals, and were formerly carried in the procession on fair days, but as their numbers grew gradually less, the custom was discontinued, and finally became extinct in 1870.

Palmer, "Pen and Pencil," p. 64.

In 31 Henry VIII. (1539-40), the same Robert Acton and Thomas Acton (his son?) demise to George Hawe or Hall, "a water mill and horse mill in Walsall, Curtis MS.

1539-1541. — a parcel of the Manor of Walsall which the said Robert Acton held to farm of the demise and grant of Henry VIII. for term of his life." This George Hawe was probably the founder of the "Old White Hart" at Caldmore, and we shall meet with his family again at a later period.

Harl. MS.

Shaw, v. ii,  
p. 72.

The following year, 32 Henry VIII. (1540-1), Robert Acton must have died, as the manor was re-granted by the king to Sir John Dudley, afterwards Duke of Northumberland and Earl of Warwick. Shaw says that "Walsall manor seems to have been an appendage to the Earldom of Warwick from the Beauchamps to the above John Dudley, and to have gone along with it as an appendage." Against this assumption, however, is the fact that the duke was not created Earl of Warwick until 1 Ed. VI. (1547-8), six years after obtaining possession of the estate.

Hist. of War-  
wickshire."

Dugdale has described this duke as a man of great wealth, unbounded ambition, and one of the basest characters of the age. His father was the notorious Edmund Dudley, who, with the assistance of Richard Empson, contributed so unscrupulously to the avarice of Henry VII. Edmund, together with Empson, was beheaded in 1510.

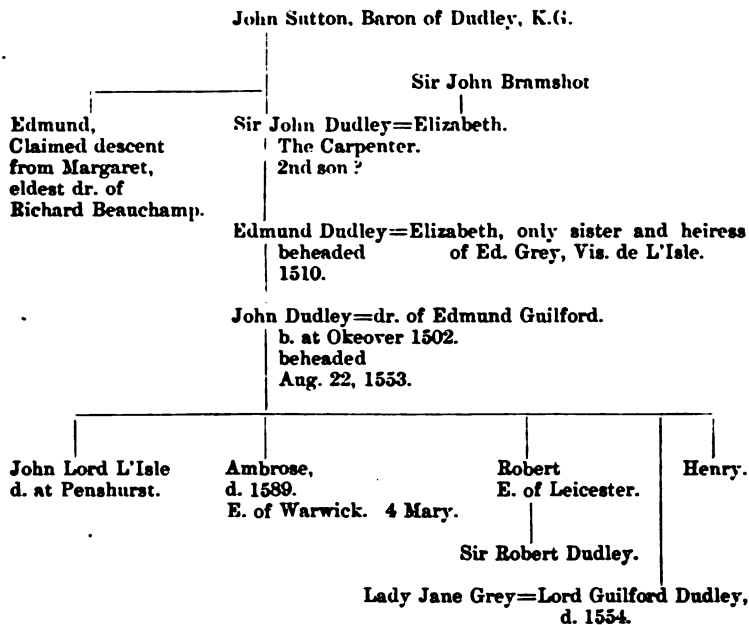
Erdswick, pp.  
249, 272.

Edmund Dudley was the son of Sir John Dudley, Baron of Dudley. About the birth of this Sir John Dudley, lies considerable uncertainty, and no small amount of tradition. Erdswick remarks that he is said to have taken his name from Dudley, where he was born, and to have claimed descent as 2nd son from John Sutton, 5th Baron of Dudley. Tradition relates that he was a carpenter, and born in Dudley, but not of the name other than travelling for his living, and happening to be entertained at work in the Abbey of Lewes, in Sussex, where (growing into favour with the Abbot), he was appointed carpenter to the house, and there married, and was called John of Dudley, not because his name was so, but because he was born in Dudley Town. He afterwards became solicitor to the house,

grew rich, and married Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of Sir John Bramshot, with issue Edmund Dudley, who married the heiress of Edward Grey, Viscount L'Isle.

1541.

## PEDIGREE OF JOHN DUDLEY.



John Dudley, who became so famous as the Duke of Northumberland, was born at Okeover, in Staffordshire, in 1502. At his father's death in 1510, he was placed under the guardianship of Edmund Guilford, whose daughter he subsequently married. The attainder which by his father's crimes had been passed upon him, was by the influence of his mother's relatives reversed, and he was restored in blood and estate, and in 1533 was knighted. He rapidly rose in the favour of the Court, was created in 1542 Viscount de L'Isle, and K.G., Lord High Admiral, and one of the king's executors. In 1547

Erdswick,  
p. 242.

1536-1553.

he was deprived of his office of Admiral, but elevated to the rank of Earl of Warwick and Great Chamberlain of England. Finally in 1551, he was made Earl Marshal of England and Duke of Northumberland. His fourth son was Lord Guilford Dudley, husband of the Lady Jane Grey, and the Duke, after his attempt to fix the crown upon the head of this hapless lady, was found guilty of high treason, and beheaded on August 22nd, 1553.

His eldest son John was condemned to die with his father, but was reprieved and released from the tower. He retired to Penshurst, in Kent, where he died two days afterwards. His second son Ambrose inherited the title and estates, and we shall notice him further on. His third son was Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, the great favourite of Queen Elizabeth, whose princely hospitality has been faithfully recorded by Scott in his novel of *Kenilworth*. Henry, another son, was slain at the battle of St. Quentin.

In the Beauchamp Tower in the Tower of London, is a device carved by this John Dudley while imprisoned there. Above his name are the lion, the bear and ragged staff, with some lines of poetry surrounded with various flowers, emblematic of the christian names of his four sons.

John Dudley was Sheriff of Staffordshire, in 28 Henry VIII. (1536-7), and at his death was possessed in this neighbourhood of the Manors of Dudley, Birmingham, and Walsall. Of this latter, "he was lord of the manor and borough, of 200 acres of pasture, and 100 acres of wood, with the appurtenances called Walsall Park, lying in Walsall. He was also seized of the Rectory of Walsall, with its tythes and other appurtenances worth £10 per annum, and Bentley, and parcel of the Manor of Walsall." Towards the close of his reign, King Henry VIII. conferred upon this nobleman large grants of church lands, which appear at the time to have excited the envy and hatred of the clergy. In an old MS.,

Shaw, v. ii,  
p. 72.

*Ibid.*

it states that "he received divers chief rents and services out of divers charity lands within the manor, as parcel of the seigniorie of Walsall, until the statute of 1 Ed. VI. (1547-8) made for the dissolving of chantries, by which statute the rents and services thereof are reserved to the lord; but the tenure being extinct, he hath nothing but the chief rents."

1554.

On the death and attainder of Dudley in 1553, his estates were of course forfeited to the Crown, but Queen Mary in the 4th year of her reign (1555-6), regranted the title and some of the lands to his son Ambrose. He was known as the good Earl of Warwick, but died without issue on May 4th, 1589. At his death, he was possessed of lands in Walsall called Barnesfield, Monksfield, Bromeyleasue, Whitemore, and other lands lying in Milnefurlonge, which were formerly possessed by the Monastery of Hales Owen.

Calendar of  
Deeds, No.

In the meantime the Manor of Walsall itself was granted by Queen Mary, on November 30th, 1553, for the sum of £40 yearly rent, to Richard Wilbraham of Woodhey, near Nantwich, in Cheshire. The Harl. MS. records, "Walsall Foreign and Boro., in county of Stafford, parcel of the possessions of John, lately Duke of Northumberland, rated 27th April, for Rychard Wilbram and Thomas Wylbram Esqs." These gentlemen purchased some rights which still belonged to the Acton family, and also acquired from Edward Lord Stafford some lands which belonged to his grandfather, the Duke of Buckingham.

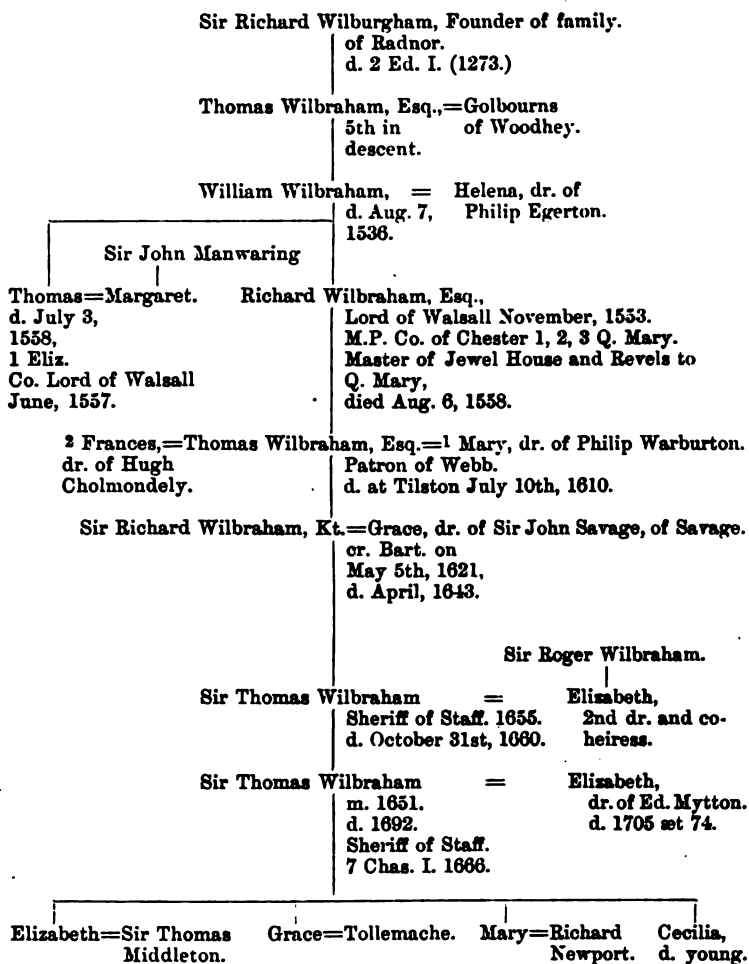
Harl. MS., No  
1062-53b.

The Wilbrahams were an old and wealthy Cheshire family. William Wilbraham, father of the Richard and Thomas who owned this manor, died in 1536, and lies buried in Acton Church, Cheshire. He left behind him a curious will, in which he bequeaths his body to be buried before the image of Our Lady, in the chancel of the church at Acton, 12 white gowns to be given to 12 poor men, and also "that 12 torches be made to hold about his body the day of his burial, and that a light be over him, with VIII tapers, in the middle whereof a bigger taper should spring out," &c., &c.

Ormerod,  
"Hist. of  
Cheshire."



## PEDIGREE OF WILBRAHAM.



Of his sons Thomas and Richard Wilbraham, 1557-1580. —  
 who became lords of Walsall, but little is known. Thomas married Margaret, the daughter of Sir John Mainwaring, and died without issue on July 3rd, 1558. His brother Richard was master of the Jewel House and of the Revels to Queen Mary, and from this circumstance probably became connected with the manor. He was also M.P. for the county of Chester, in the 1st—3rd year of Q. Mary. On June 9th, 1557, a fresh grant was made by the Queen, "as well in consideration of the good, true, and faithful service to us by our aforesaid servant Richard Wilbram, heretofore many times done and performed, as for the sum of £1,026 10s. 0d. well and faithfully paid, we, . . . do give and grant to Richard Wilbram and his brother Thomas," &c. The grant included the Borough and Foreign of Walsall, the "Parke, now disparted," the vicarage and adowson, with all manorial rights and liberties, "except bells and all lead in or upon premises," to be held in capite by the fortieth part of one knight's service for all rents, &c. On the death of his brother Thomas, on July 3rd, 1558, Richard Wilbraham became sole heir to the Cheshire estates, and of the Manor of Walsall, but only lived to enjoy them for a few weeks, dying on August 6th, 1558. He was succeeded by his son Thomas, a literary man, and one who appears to have been much respected in Walsall. He was patron of Mr. Webb, who wrote the "Itinerary of Cheshire," and there are several deeds relating to him in the Walsall Calendar.

Ormerod's  
 "Cheshire,"  
 v. iii, pp.  
 198-200.

Patent Rolls.

In 22 Eliz. (1579-80), there is a copy of proceedings taken in the Queen's Bench by Walter Whytehall, gent., against the Mayor of Walsall and others, for assault and false imprisonment. The Mayor, in justification, stated that, when presiding at the great Leet of Thos. Wylbram, Esq., of the Manor of Walsall, the said Walter had disturbed the court, and had addressed him in the following words: "Thowe arte a false harlott, and lyst falselye in thye harte." Whereupon the said Walter was imprisoned for the "4<sup>th</sup> parte of an houre."

Calendar of  
 Deeds, 123.

1589-1611.  
Calendar of  
Deeds, 133,  
134.

In 31 Eliz. (1589), Thomas Wilbram, of Woodhey, on account of his "love and affection" for the inhabitants of Walsall, grants to them on a lease of 100 years a shop, which the governours of the said town had erected in the High Street there, with buildings over it commonly called "the highe crosse" in Walsall, upon the soil or waste of the said Thomas Wilbram, "where, heretofore, there was an olde crosse standinge called the highe crosse in Walsall, for the beautyfying of the said towne, as also for the provision of places of punishment and correction of dyvers lewde and mysdemeyned persons." Rent 4d. Dated October 12th, 31 Eliz. (1589).

Ibid, 140.

In 36 Eliz. (1594), an agreement was made between the freeholders of Walsall and John Persehouse of Reynold's Hall, respecting inclosures which the said Mr. Persehouse had made out of Holbroke. The agreement was made at the mediation of Sir Edward Lyttleton, Knight, and Thomas Wilbraham, Esq.

Ibid, 145.

Another agreement bearing date 40 Eliz. (1597-8), is also signed by the same Thomas Wilbraham, as lord of the manor. Thomas Wilbraham died at Tilston, on July 12th, 1610, and was buried at Acton. His estates, and Walsall among them, were inherited by his son Richard, who was created a baronet in 1607, and would appear to have come into possession before the death of his father. The reign of Sir Richard seems to have been of an oppressive character, for in 8 Jas. I. (1610-11), Sir Richard Wilbraham lays a complaint against William Webb, Joane Ball, Thomas Nicholls, and George Hawe, of Walsall, for refusing to pay heriot and other fines. A heriot has been defined as "the tribute from a tenant to his lord towards preparation for war, ordinarily the best beast or other chattell of a tenant, which in some manors, the lord had a right to take at his tenant's death."

Mosley's "Hist.  
of Tutbury,"  
p. 14.

Sir Richard prays for a writ of "subpcena" to

compel the defendants to produce certain court rolls and other documents, which they had obtained by sinister means, to enable him to prove his right. In their defence, the burgesses brought forward the old charters of William Ruffus, Roger Morteyn, and Thomas Ruffus, and the case appears to have ended in a compromise, for we find the freeholders and copyholders of Walsall contributed towards a sum of £103 6s. 8d. to be given to the lord of the manor, as a composition for relief from fines, &c. Since then the copyholders appear to have been left alone, and they still enjoy the privilege derived from the Charter 2 Ed. II., of paying only a few pence to the lord of the manor.

1611-1660.

Calendar of  
Deeds,  
191-197.

It may be noted that at this time a "Secret Society" or fellowship of twenty-four persons, at command of the Mayor, was formed to resist the payment of these claims. While this contention was in progress, a survey of the manor was made by order of Sir Richard. This record, which is of extreme interest, and which will be referred to later on, is dated May, 1617. It contains a lengthy list of those holding land or houses on the estate, and throws light upon many points and place-names hitherto obscure. The metes and bounds of the parish at this time are accurately defined, and may be read in full in the appendix.

Ibid., 201, art. 32.

In 10 Chas. I. (1634-5), Sir Richard is noticed as purchasing from Sir William Glascott the lordship of Shelfield, for the sum of £24. He died in April, 1643, and his possessions were inherited by his son, Sir Thomas Wilbraham. This baronet's reign was more peaceful than that of his father. He married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Roger Wilbraham, Knight, of Nantwich, one of the Masters of Request to James I. and founder of the Townsend branch of this family. Sir Thomas was Sheriff of Staffordshire in 1655, and died on October 31st, 1660. He was buried with his wife, under a handsome monument, in the church at Acton. They lie recumbent on an altar

Curtis MS.

Ormerod.

Pennant's  
"Journey,"  
p. 30.

1660-1686. — tomb of white marble. He is in armour, with long curled hair and a turn-over, with one hand on his breast. Beneath him is spread a large cloak. His lady has a book in one hand, while the other reclines on her breast. Ormerod remarks, "they appear to have been graced with every social virtue that could render rank endearing to their equals and venerated by their dependants," and their family is rarely noticed in the Cheshire Collections without ardent expressions of respect and affection.

V. iii, p. 108.

On the north side of the tomb already mentioned is an inscription commemorating Sir Thomas and doing justice to the excellence of his religious and moral qualities, and to his scientific acquirements. Sir Thomas Wilbraham lived through the struggles of the Civil Wars, in which he distinguished himself by his loyalty, and for which he had to compound for his estates at the price of £2,500.

His son, Sir Thomas, the last of his line, inherited the title and estates. He married, in 1651, Elizabeth, daughter of Edward Mytton, of Weston, and appears to have lived mostly at Weston. He had issue four daughters, the second of whom, Grace, was married to Sir Lionel Tollemache, of Helmingham, in Suffolk, afterwards created Earl of Dysart. His third daughter, Mary, became the wife of Richard Viscount Newport, afterwards 2nd Earl of Bradford. Sir Thomas was distinguished in the Royal service and was nominated one of the knights of the intended Order of the Royal Oak, his estates being then valued at £3,000 per annum.

Salt Collections,  
v. i, p. 375.

Ormerod.

On May 20th, 1686, Sir Thomas Wilbraham and Elizabeth his wife made a settlement of their estates by which, amongst others, the Manor of Walsall was settled, after their deaths, upon their younger daughter Mary, and the heirs of her body. The Cheshire and other estates of Sir Thomas devolved upon the elder daughter Grace, with remainder in either case on failure of issue to the surviving sister or her heirs.

Together with the Manor of Walsall was given the advowson of the vicarage, with certain lands and tenements in Great Bloxwich, Harden, Goscote, Shelfield, and Caldmore. 1686-1744.  
—

Sir Thomas Wilbraham was Sheriff of Staffordshire in 7 Chas. II. (1666), and he died in August, 1692. His wife, Elizabeth, survived him, and died in 1705, aged 74. Thus for a period of thirteen years she was lady of this manor.

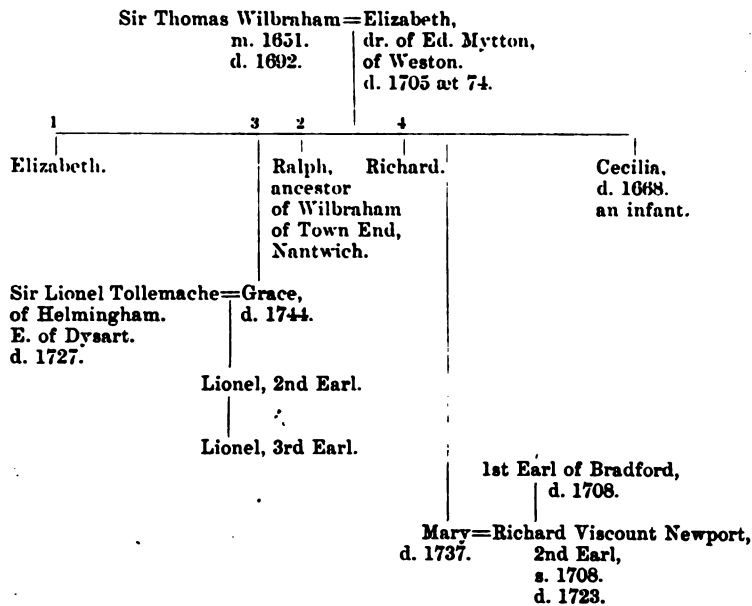
There are numerous portraits of the Wilbrahams at Weston Hall.

Dame Elizabeth Wilbraham died on July 27th, 1705, and by virtue of the settlement executed in 1686, the Manor of Walsall came to her daughter Mary, who had married, on April 20th, 1681, at Weston, Richard Viscount Newport. In 1708 he succeeded his father as 2nd Earl of Bradford. He was Lord of Weston and Walsall, and Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire in 1704. He was afterwards Lord Lieutenant for the county of Montgomery, and died on June 14th, 1723. His widow, Lady Bradford, survived him for many years, and died at Weston in December, 1737, leaving her Manor of Walsall to her third but eldest surviving son Thomas, fourth and last Earl of Bradford of the Newport family. This Earl was incapable of managing his estates, owing to a fall from his horse when a child, and the care of his property was entrusted by the Crown to Sir Orlando Bridgeman of Castle Bromwich, the husband of Anne, his eldest surviving sister, and the Countess of Mountrath, his younger sister. This Earl died without issue on April 18th, 1762. From a rent roll taken about the time of his accession, in 1744, the value of Walsall Manor seems to have amounted to over £500 per annum. Salt Collections,  
v. i, p. 370.

The Court Rolls of the manor from 1672 to 1742, are still preserved, but they relate in the main only to changes of property, and are devoid of special interest. Penes,  
Lord Bradford.

1763.

DESCENT OF MANOR  
FROM THE  
WILBRAHAMS TO THE NEWPORTS.



Salt Collections,  
v. i, p. 377.

According to his mother's will, the estates came to his nephew, Sir Henry Bridgeman, Bart., son and heir of his third sister Anne, who had married Sir Orlando Bridgeman, and to his fourth and youngest sister, Lady Diana, Countess Dowager of Mountrath, the only surviving representative of the Newport family.

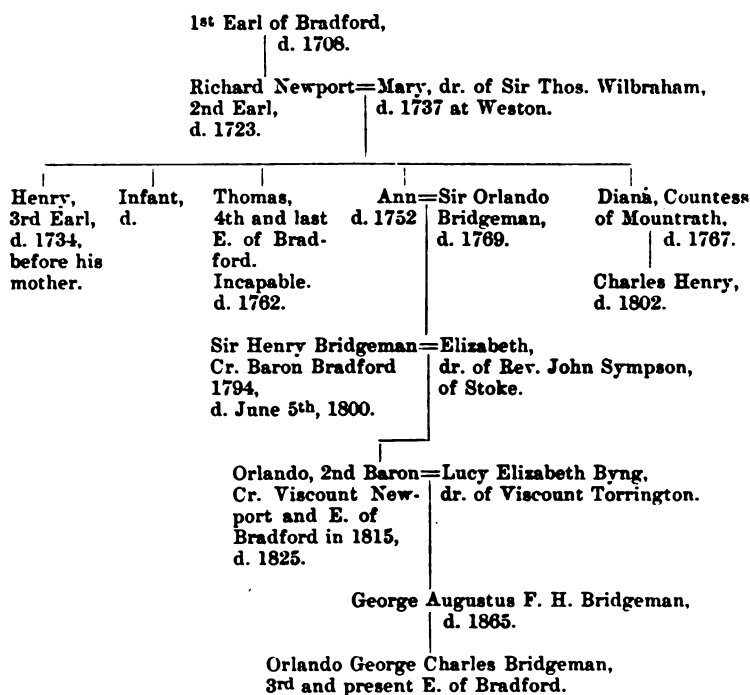
By a deed dated the following year (October 29th, 1763), the estates were equally divided by lot between the said Diana and her nephew, Sir Henry Bridgeman. The Manor of Walsall, together with certain messuages, water mill, farm lands and tenements in Walsall, and the advowson of the vicarage, fell to Lady Mountrath, who became lady of this

manor. She was the wife of Algernon Coote, 6th Earl of Mountrath, was married in 1721, and died in 1767, leaving an only son, Charles Henry, 7th and last Earl of Mountrath. He lived in Norfolk, and died in 1802, and the Manor of Walsall, by his will, passed to his cousin, Sir Henry Bridgeman. The value of the manor, which in 1774 was about £500, had at this time (1800) increased to over £1500 per annum.

1763-1815.

Peerage.

### PEDIGREE OF NEWPORT AND BRIDGEMAN.



Sir Henry Bridgeman was created Baron Bradford in 1794, and died in 1800, leaving a son, Orlando Bridgeman, who succeeded as 2nd Baron, and who was in 1815 created Viscount Newport and Earl of



1815-1887. — Bradford. He was successively Chief Baron of the Exchequer, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, and Keeper of the Great Seal. His lordship married the Hon. Lucy Elizabeth Byng, eldest daughter and sole heiress of George, 4th Viscount Torrington, and died September 7th, 1825. He left issue George Augustus Frederick Henry Bridgeman, 2nd Earl of Bradford, who died March 22nd, 1865, and was succeeded by his son Orlando George Charles Bridgeman, 3rd and present Earl of Bradford.

Peerage.

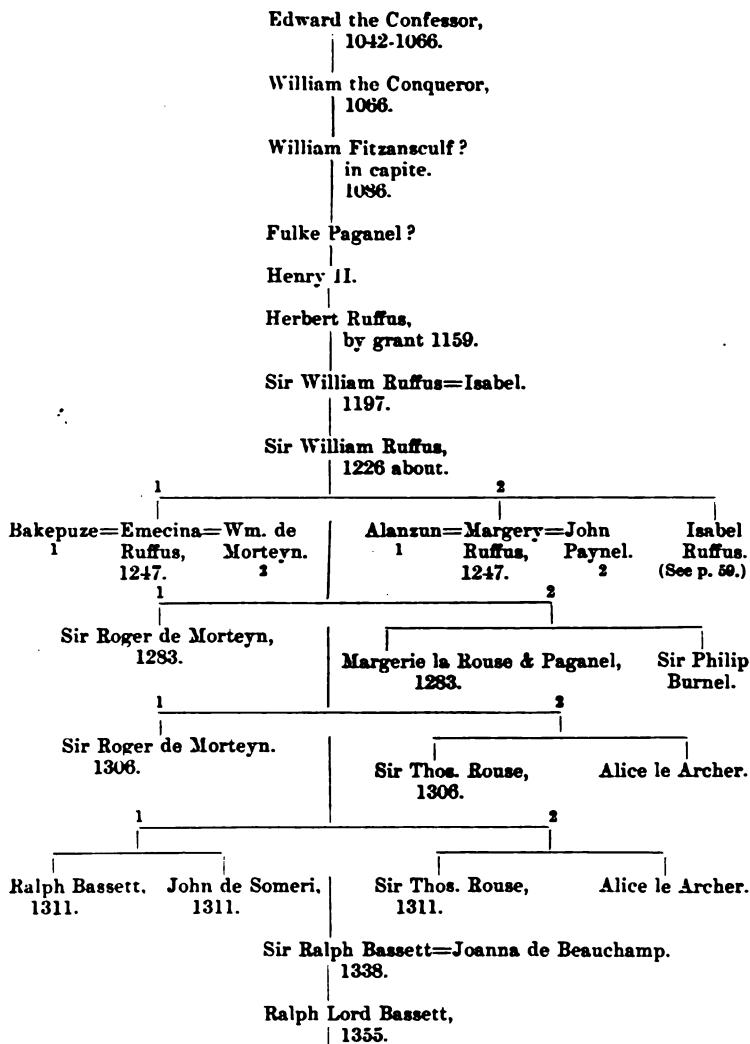
The present Earl was born April 24th, 1819, and during his father's life represented South Shropshire in Parliament, from 1842-1865. He was Vice-Chamberlain of H.M. Household in 1852, and again in 1858-1859; Lord Chamberlain from 1866 to 1868; and Master of the Horse from 1874 to 1880.

His eldest son and heir is Viscount Newport, M.P., who was born in 1845.

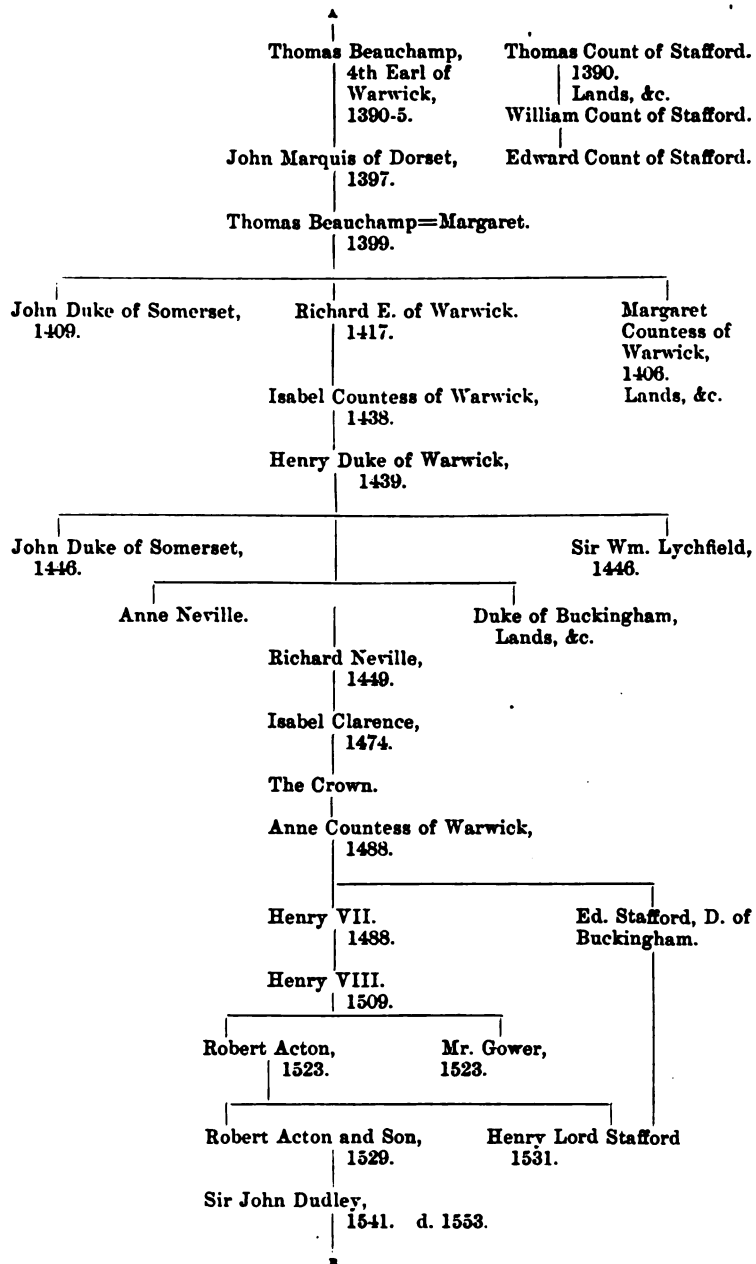
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THE FOLLOWING TABLE ILLUSTRATES THE SUCCESSION OF  
THE MANOR :

SUCCESSION OF THE MANOR OF WALSALL.



## OWNERS OF THE MANOR.



Queen Mary.

1553.

Richard Wilbraham, Esq.,

1553.

Thomas Wilbraham, Esq.,

1558. d. 1610.

Sir Richard Wilbraham.

1610.

Sir Thos. Wilbraham,

1643.

Sir Thos. Wilbraham=Elizabeth Mytton.

1660.

Elizabeth Wilbraham.

Rich. Newport, E. of Bradford=Mary Wilbraham.

d. 1723.

Mary Lady Bradford,

d. 1737.

Thomas Newport, 4th E. of Bradford.

Lady Mountrath,

d. 1767.

Chas Henry, E. of Mountrath,

d. 1802.

Sir Orlando Bridgeman,

2nd Baron Bradford,

1st Earl of Bradford,

d. 1825.

George A. F. H. Bridgeman,

2nd E. of Bradford,

d. 1865.

Orlando George Chas. Bridgeman,

3rd Earl of Bradford.

## THE CHURCH.

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The history of the old Parish Church of St. Matthew next claims attention. It was originally dedicated to All Saints, a distinction which it retained until the time of the Reformation.

When or by whom it was founded is unknown, but from the antiquity of the manor and early town, and from the conspicuous position of the church itself, there appears fair warrant for the belief that it existed during the early Norman period, if not before.

*Diocesan Hist.  
of Lichfield,  
pp. 24, 33, &c.*

The evangelization of this part of Staffordshire was commenced by St. Chad in the latter half of the seventh century, and tradition tells that he baptized multitudes in the rivers and lakes of this neighbourhood. By 828 many parish churches had sprung into existence, and a Collegiate Church was founded at Wolverhampton, and supplied with a numerous body of clergy, who ministered far and wide in the country around. Early churches, or rather chapels, are thought to have existed at West Bromwich and also at Wednesbury, and it is worthy of note that in some instances Æthelflæd, where she erected a castle contrived to build a church also. These primitive little churches were usually built of timber and thatch with latticed windows, and most of them disappeared in the 11th and 12th centuries, to be replaced by others of a more substantial structure.

The earliest definite information we have of the existence of a church here, is in "1 John (1200), when, by a charter dated April 25th, the king granted the church of Wallehale to the Bishop of Coventry." The same charter includes a grant of the churches of "Rugeley and Canok to the church of SS. Mary and Chad, Lichfield."

THE CHURCH  
1200-1223.

Charter Rolls.

The next record is in 12 John (1210-1), when that king who was patron of the living appointed one of his chaplains, Magister Serlo de Sunning, as the rector, whilst at the same time Magister William, another of the royal chaplains, was appointed to Wednesbury church. Magister Serlo is the first rector of whom we find notice, and it is worthy of remark that a namesake and possibly a relation of his, Robert Serlo, was Mayor of London about this time.

Plea Rolls.

For the next twelve years we hear nothing further of the church, but in January, 1223 (7 Henry III.), the Plea Rolls contain an entry, which throws a good deal of light upon the history of this time, and shows that the relations between the rector and the lord of the manor were in modern parlance 'considerably strained.' The Roll for this year states that "William Ruffus was summoned to answer by what right he claimed the advowson of the church of Waleshalle, which Magister Serlo de Sunning holds of the gift of King John the father of the king, and of which the king is the patron, and on account of which Serlo complained that the said William had distrained him by his goods, &c., and taken his cattle, and done him many other injuries, because he would never acknowledge him as patron of the said church; and for twelve years past that he had held the said church by gift of king John. William had taken every year from him the cattle and corn of his tythes, and wasted his land, and taken and imprisoned his men, and from one of his servants he took twelve marks, so that he has been damaged to the amount altogether of two

THE CHURCH.  
1223-1225.

hundred marks, and therefore he brings suit. And William appeared and stated he made no claim to the advowson, that he held the manor from the ancestors of the lord the king, and acknowledged the king was patron, and as to the rest of the complaint he denied it in toto, and offered to defend it by wager of battle. And Magister Serlo stated that as regards the trespass he had impleaded him as a *Clericus* in Court Christian; and William had produced a writ of '*prohibe ne procedat*' in the said suit. A day was given to William Ruffus to have judgment in the Octaves of St. Michael, '*nisi Justiciarii*,' &c., and Magister Serlo to have a writ to the Justices of '*ne procedat*' if he wished." What was the final result of this suit, the Plea Rolls do not tell, but a significant entry regarding the advowson occurs in the 12 Henry III. (1227-8). "The church of Walesdale is of the gift of the lord the king. Magister Serlo holds it by the gift of King John."

Plea Rolls.

Somewhere about the year 1225, Sir William Ruffus, then lord of the manor, granted to the Abbey of Hales Owen, in Worcestershire, the Church of Walesdale, together with its Chapels. As subsequent events proved, this gift led to considerable trouble and dispute. The following is a translation of the deed in question:—

Walesdale  
Chartulary.

"To all sons of Holy Mother Church, to whom this present writing shall come, William Ruffus, of Walesdale, greeting: Be it known to all that I for the sake of God, and with a pious intent, have given, granted, and by this my present Charter have confirmed to God, and to the church of St. Mary of Hales, and to the Canons of the Præmonstratensian order, serving God there, the church of Walesdale, with its chapels and appurtenances, and with all its other liberties; to have and to hold in free, pure, and perpetual alms, for maintaining the charity of the same house, for the salvation of my soul and those of all my ancestors and successors. These being witnesses:—Peter, Lord Bishop of Winchester; William, Lord Bishop of Coventry; Richard, Lord Abbot of Welbeck; Henry of Aldetheleg; Robert Marmion; William Marmion, his brother; Richard, son of William of Brameurice; William Hasato; Adam of St. Mary; Thomas, Chaplain of Hales."

This deed was confirmed in a charter given by THE CHURCH Henry III., and dated from Evesham, on 15th 1233-1241. June, 1233.

It may here be noticed that the abbey did not at this time acquire the advowson of the living, which remained in the hands of the king or of the Bishop of Lichfield, as evidenced by a subsequent deed.

The Abbey of Hales Owen, which for a long period from this time exercised great authority over the church, deserves here a brief notice.

The Manor of Hales was given by King John in the 18th year of his reign, to Peter de Rupibus, Bishop of Winchester, to build a religious house. Nash's "Worcestershire." The monastery was completed in 1218, and was conferred by the Bishop on the Præmonstratensian Canons of Welbeck. Those of Hales Owen numbered as many as thirty, and were patrons of a long list of churches, including those of Harborne, Wednesbury, Walsall, Rushall, Tichfield Priory, and Dotfield near Bromsgrove, together with extensive lands, whose owners still enjoy the privilege of living "tythe free as when they belonged to the church." The Burton's "Leicestershire." Priory was valued, 1533, at £280 13s. 2d. per annum. It was destroyed in 1537, and only a few fragmentary ruins remain. These consist of remnants of fine gothic arches, some massive walls, and the lid of a stone coffin.

The Testa de Neville taken 19-24 Henry III. (1234-40), records that "the church of Waleshal is of the gift of the lord the king. Magister Serlo holds it by the gift of King John."

In the Plea Roll for 25 Henry III. (1240-1), it relates that "Henry, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, was summoned to show cause before the lord the king, why he should not surrender to the king the Manors of Ruggeley and Canok, which were part of the king's demesne, and for which King John had first given to the bishop's predecessor £10 annually from the Treasury, and afterwards that he



THE CHURCH. might be quit of payment of the said £10, and that  
 1241-1245. the said manors might revert to the king's father,  
 — he gave him the advowsons of the churches of  
 Walesdale and Canok." The Bishop appeared by  
 attorney and prayed a view. A day is given to him at  
 the Octaves of Michaelmas, and a view is ordered  
 to be taken in the interim.

In connection with this transaction we may  
 Shaw, v. i. note that the Tenure Roll of Offlow (1255) states,  
 "Memorandum that Rugeley and Cannock, with their  
 belongings, were manors of the lord the king in the  
 time of King Richard. And King Richard gave the  
 said manors to Lord Hugo de Novant, bishop; and  
 King John gave to him the Church of Walesdale," &c.  
 From the above extracts it is evident that the  
 advowson of the church here alternated from King  
 John to the Bishop, and from the latter again to  
 Henry III.

Magister Serlo must have died about the year  
 1244, for at this time we find that Osbert de  
 Maidenstan, chaplain of the king, had letters of  
 Patent Roll. presentation given to him, "to the Church of Wales-  
 hale, and letters are directed to Master W. de  
 Radenour, the official of the Archbishop of Canterbury,  
 in the Bishopric of Coventry and Lichfield." Dated  
 Westminster, June 3rd, 29 Henry III.

Ibid. To Master Robert de Stafford, Archdeacon of  
 Stafford, are directed similar letters, "ex habundandi."

In the year 1245 (29 Henry III.), the Church of  
 Walesdale, together with its chapels and belongings,  
 was a second time granted by King Henry III. to Hales  
 Owen Abbey. The reasons for this proceeding are not  
 far to seek. The Church of Walesdale appears to have  
 occupied an important position in the diocese; its  
 revenues and endowments had largely increased, and  
 it was at this time doubtless a very valuable possession  
 of the abbey. But the monks felt that at best their  
 tenure was an uncertain one, that the advowson  
 belonged virtually to the king, and that at any time  
 he or his successors might lay claim, not only to the

advowson itself, but also to the revenues appertaining to it. They naturally desired to make their claim secure, and when obtaining from the king a confirmation of the original grant and foundation charter of the abbey, they also obtained a charter conferring upon them the Church of Walesdale, and the Chapels of Wednesbury, Bloxwich, and Rushall, which were then under its jurisdiction, and the two latter of which were chapels of ease to the church of Walesdale. Copies of this grant are preserved in the Chartulary and in the Registrum Album belonging to the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield. The charter is dated at Woodstock, "15th July, in the 29th of our reign" (1245).

THE CHURCH.  
1245-1247.

The following is a translation of this important document:—

"Henry by the grace of God King of England and Lord of Ireland, Duke of Normandy, and Aquitaine, Count of Anjou, to his Archbishops, Bishops, Abbots, Priors, Earls, Barons, Justices, Sheriffs, Ministers, and to all his Bailiffs and faithful subjects greeting. Be it known that we by the grace of God, and for the salvation of our souls and the souls of our ancestors and heirs, have given, granted, and by this our present charter have confirmed, so far as our patronage goes, for us and our heirs, to God and the church of the Blessed Mary of Hales, and to the brother Richard, Abbot of the same place, and to the Canons of the Præmonstratensian order serving God there, and to their successors serving God there, for ever, the church of Walesdale, with all chapels belonging to the same church, and with all other its appurtenances, to have and to hold in free, pure, and perpetual alms. Wherefore we will and steadfastly decree for us and for our heirs, that the aforesaid Abbot and Canons and their successors shall have and hold the aforesaid Church of Walesdale, with all chapels, liberties, and other appurtenances belonging to the same church, well and in peace, freely and quietly, in free, pure, and perpetual alms as is aforesaid. These being witnesses:—Richard our brother, Earl of Cornwall; Richard de Clare, Earl of Gloucester; Simon de Montefort, Earl of Leicester; Humfrey de Boun, Earl of Hereford; Peter de Sabaud; William of York, governor of Beverley; Ffulk, the son of Waro; Paulinus Pryner; Gilbert de Segrave; John L'estrange; Robert Muscegros; Robert le Norreys; Anketell Maleri and others. Given under our hand at Woodstock, 15 July, in the 29 year of our reign."

Two years later, we read that "Master Vincent, the companion and master of Aymar, the brother

Patent Roll.  
31 Henry III.

THE CHURCH.  
1248.  
—

of the king, has letters of presentation to the Church of Waleshal, which is vacant and in the gift of the king." Dated June 21st, 31 Henry III. This entry shows that the king still retained his hold upon the advowson.

Having obtained possession of the church, the abbot and his friends next sought the sanction of the bishop for the transference of the great tythes, and for the transforming of the rectory into a vicarage. This appears to have been a common custom among the monasteries at that time. Blunt, in his "Sketch of the Reformation," says, "the great tythes were reserved for the abbey fund, and the small tythes left as a miserable stipend (often not more than the sixteenth part of the revenue of the benefice), to the minister under the title of 'vicarius.'" A similar instance occurred in the old church of West Bromwich, where a vicar was appointed by the Canons of Sandwell to do their work for them.

Willett, "Hist.  
of West Brom-  
wich, pp.  
27, 56.

The design of the monks as regarded Waleshale, was accomplished in 1248, when a deed was obtained from the Bishop of Lichfield for appropriating the church, together with its Chapels of Wednesbury and Rushall, and ordaining the Vicarage of Waleshal.

Waleshale  
Chartulary.

The following is a summary of the document in question:—"Roger, the Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, and Richard, the Treasurer of Lichfield, after stating their approval of the pious disposition of the king in granting to the abbey the patronage of the church, and expressing their desire for the benefit of those religious persons the abbot and his monks, 'to whom on account of the conflux of strangers (as it is reported), sufficient means are not afforded for Godly charity,' decree, with the consent of the Chapter of Lichfield, that on the death or resignation of the then rector, Master Vincent, the said abbot and convent should have the Church of Waleshal with its appurtenances and revenues, to convert them to their own use. To the vicarage was reserved, thirteen marks to be assigned to the

vicar by faithful and discreet persons deputed by the bishop. This was to be derived from certain obventions of the church. The same persons were to divide the area and buildings of the church, between the monks and the vicar as they thought fit. The vicar for the time being was to pay the accustomed burdens and alms to the bishop and archdeacon. For the burdens and services due to them from the Chapelries of Wednesbury and Russhale, the vicar was to have over and above the thirteen marks already given to him, all the revenues of these chapels except the sheaves of corn, which revenues, if insufficient to bear the service and burdens of these chapels, were to be augmented by other incomes of the church. All other burdens were to be borne by the abbot and vicar in respective proportion. The abbot and convent were to pay annually to the church at Lichfield, six marks for peaceable possession of the Church of Waleshal, over which the church at Lichfield had sometimes claimed a right. Out of the six marks 60s. were assigned for the works or repairs of the Church of Lichfield, and the remaining 20s. for the vicar appointed for saying the Mass of the Blessed Virgin." Dated at Lichfield, December 30, 1248.

THE CHURCH.  
1248.  
—

The original appropriation of Walsall Church (1248), is said to be in the possession of Lord Lyttleton at Hagley.

The rectorial tythes, described under the heading of "Sheaves of Corn," do not appear to have ever been reunited to the church. When the monasteries were dissolved (1535-1539), the tythes were given by Henry VIII. to Sir John Dudley, to be held under military tenure. In the last century the greater part were sold in lots to different purchasers, and the burden of the chancel was attached to the two larger lots, which were sold to the Earl of Bradford and Colonel Walhouse. In 1845, the tythes were commuted, those of the rectorial for £330, and the vicarial for £300 per annum.

See p. 94.

THE CHURCH.  
1255-1291.

Shaw, v. i.

The Tenure Roll of Offlow Hundred (1255) states that "the Church of Waleshill is in the gift of the lord the king, and the Abbot of Hales has the above-mentioned church out of the gift of the lord the king, who now reigns, and it is worth 40 marks per annum." "The Church of Wonesbury is a chapel pertaining to that of Waleshal." At this time the Churches of Waleshal and Wednesbury were in the Rural Deanery of Tamworth and Tutbury.

Hist. of Tam-  
worth Church,  
p. 17.

Roger de Weseham, Bishop of Lichfield, died in 1256, and his successor, Roger de Molend, in 1278 confirmed the appropriation of the Church of Wales-hale to the Abbey of Hales, subject to a pension of 60s. from Walsall. The submission of the Abbey of Hales Owen to the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield on this and other matters is dated the year before (1248), and is preserved in the Magnum Registrum Album at Lichfield.

Salt Coll., v. vi,  
pt. 2, pp. 119,  
146, 153.

Cal. of Deeds, 4.

On the 25th March, 7 Ed. I. (1279), the appropriation was formally ratified and approved by Ralph de Sempringham, the Dean and the Chapter of Lichfield.

Plea Rolls.

A few years later, 14 Ed. I. (1285-6), the Abbot of Hales appeared to answer the plea of John Paganel and Margaret his wife, that he should permit them to present a fit parson to the Church of Wales-hale, and they did not appear, and were the plaintiffs; the suit was therefore dismissed.

In the year 1288, Pope Nicholas IV. granted the tenths of all church benefices to Ed. I. for six years, towards the expenses of a Crusade. The account was completed under the direction of the Bishops of Winchester and Lincoln by 19 Ed. I. (1290-1), and it states that "Waleshal appr. Abb. de Hales XVIII marks, XXIV decim. (sh.)" Under the heading "Taxation of temporal goods," it states, "the Abbot of Hales has at Waleshal three acres of land which are worth per an. XVI<sup>d</sup>."

Shaw, v. i, p. xx.

For the next few years the abbey seems to have enjoyed peacefully the revenues of the church here,

and the presentation to the living; but in 21 Ed. I. THE CHURCH. 1292-1301.  
(1292-3), a "quo warranto" was issued by the Crown, for the recovery of the advowsons of Walsall and Wednesbury.

Nicholas de Burton had this same year been appointed by the king to the living of Wednesbury, then vacant, and it would appear that the abbot, resenting this presentation by the king, entered into a suit for the trial of the question at issue. The case was tried before John de Berewik and other Justices for the county of Stafford. On the part of the king it was argued that the advowson of both churches formerly belonged to the Crown in the time of King John, and that consequently the right of presentation belonged to the reigning monarch. For the defence it was urged that Henry III. had granted a charter by which "the Church of Walesdale, together with its Chapels of Wednesbury and Rushall, were granted to the Abbey of Hales Owen for ever." Hugo de Lowther, on behalf of the Crown, contended that, "at the time of King Henry's grant, the Church of Wednesbury was not one of the chapels belonging to Walesdale, but had for some time previously been a mother church, and was in no way connected with Walesdale."

Abbreviation  
Placitorum.

Placita (quo  
warranto.

Stafford Assize  
Roll, 21 Ed. 1.

A verdict was given for the king, and the advowson of Wednesbury Church thus reverted to the Crown. In spite of this adverse decision, the abbot and convent, until the dissolution, still continued to exercise, with few exceptions, the right of presenting to both livings.

A few years later (May 5th, 1301), the king accepted a fine of ten marks from the abbot for the advowson of Wednesbury Church, "whereby it may be concluded," says Shaw, "that the Crown parted with its right in the advowson for this sum of money."

Walesdale  
Chartulary.

In 1301, the advowson, together with the tythes and other belongings of Wednesbury Church, were formally given up to the Abbot and the Abbey of Hales

Ibid.

THE CHURCH. Owen for ever, and the appropriation was, in 1305,  
1301. confirmed by the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry.

The abbot arranged for the sum of ten marks annually for Nicholas de Burton to resign the living. Thomas de Hales, the then abbot, became vicar on June 1st, 1301. In 1309, this same Thomas was translated to the Vicarage of Walesdale. It would seem that from time to time the abbot exercised his right, for among the papers included in Bishop Norbury's Register, preserved at Lichfield, is one in which the Abbot of Hales Owen brings forward his claim to the impropriation of Walsall, with the Chapels of Wednesbury and Rushall. Dated from Beaudesert, 1332.

Page 301.

Shortly after this a prebend appears to have been attached to the Collegiate Church of Stafford, and on December 29th, 22 Ed. III. (1348), we find the name of John de Tamworth as "prebendary of the prebend of Walsdale, in St. Mary, Stafford."

Patent Rolls.

Valor Ecclesiasticus.

In the time of Henry VIII., the value of this appointment amounted to 26s. 8d.

Lichfield Registers.

In 1366, William de Brumsgreve (Bromsgrove), the then Vicar of Walsall, was made Abbot of Hales, and his successor, Richard de Bruge, evidently fell under the displeasure of the monastery, for in 1368 he was recalled by the abbot to Hales Owen, and placed under restraint (ad claustrum) "to undergo certain monastic discipline for a series of misdemeanours committed by him."

Inq. Post Mortem.

The Bassett family at different times left lands in the parish for the maintenance of two or more chaplains in the church. In 1335, three chaplains are mentioned, and in 1382, the last Lord Bassett leaves "for a certain chaplain in the Church of Walesdale, for the Dean and Chapter of the Church of St. Chad, at Lichfield, and repair of the church at Drayton, &c.,

Walesdale, } 100s. 1½ rent parcell of  
Tamworth, &c. } the Manor of Walesdale."

About this time were founded the various chantries formerly attached to the old church. A

chantry was a little church, chapel, or particular altar, in some cathedral or important church, and was endowed with lands and revenues of various kinds for maintaining one or more priests, whose duty it was to perform mass and offer up prayers for the souls of the founders, &c. "They were," says Knight, "choirs in miniature, and had their raised altars, tapers, crucifixes, and all the utensils of catholic worship, only on a smaller scale than in the platform of the church." A licence was always required from the king for their foundation and endowment, and a licence from the bishop for divine service. It is important also, to remember that altars were not invariably erected in chantries, and that sometimes many endowments were made at the same altar. This it will be seen actually occurred in our own parish.

THE CHURCH.  
1301.  
—

Oliver, "Hist.  
of Wolver-  
hampton  
Church,"  
p. 45.

The church originally contained two of these chapels, that of St. Catherine situated in the south transept, and that of St. Clement in the north transept. In these chapels were the several altars or chantries, which were endowed with certain lands vested in Ecclesiastical Corporations called Guilds. It seems likely that the other chantries were attached simply to the altar of the church itself, and used it in common.

Walsall! Note  
Book, p. 84.

The Ecclesiastical Corporations appear to have been two in number, the Guild of St. John the Baptist and that of Our Lady. Both possessed considerable revenues, and both were governed by officers called the master and wardens. Of the two, that of St. John was the richer and the more important. The Chantry of St. Mary is also frequently mentioned, and possessed two or more chaplains and four special chantries or altars.

The original chantries seem to have been those of St. John the Baptist, the Blessed Mary, St. Clement, St. Catherine, and St. Nicholas. Others appear to have been founded subsequently, as those by Sir John Hillary, Sir Thomas Aston, &c.



## THE CHURCH.

1365.

Waleshale  
Chartulary.

The earliest of these chantries was founded by John de Beverleye and William Colesone of Waleshale, in 39 Ed. III. (1365-6.) It was called the Beverley Chantry, and was founded by Royal Licence. The king's writ of enquiry, previous to granting the licence, is dated May 20th, 39 Ed. III. (1365); and on July 30th of the same year an Inquisition was taken at Walshale by Philip de Lutteleye, escheator of the king, by which it appears that the lands in question consisted of four messuages, one carucate of land, twenty acres of meadow, and six acres of pasture, the said messuages and carucate being held of Ralph Bassett by knight's service, and being worth 30s. clear per annum. The twenty acres of meadow and six acres of pasture were held of William de Waleshale, by service of fifteen pence rent per annum.

On August 15th, the Royal Licence was granted, and from the Episcopal Registers at Lichfield, we learn that "William Bate was admitted as priest on April 4th, 1366, at Haywood, on the presentation of William Coleson, of Walsale, the real founder and patron of the said chantry." Lands and tenements to the value of five marks per annum, with appurtenances in Walshall and Rushall not held in capite, were set apart for its maintenance. Its object was to provide a chaplain to say mass daily at the altar of St. John the Baptist for ever.

Shaw, v. i, p. 63.

In 17 Rich. II. (1393-4), "William Coleson gave lands in Walsale to Alice, the Lady of Baysover, his later wife, for part of her joynture." William Coleson, Esq., and John de Beverley, had leave of King Ed. III. to give lands in Mortmain. Who John de Beverleye was is uncertain, but from the Patent Roll 40 Ed. III. (1366-7), we learn that he was Shield-bearer to the king, that the name of his wife was Amicia, and that he acquired at this time the Manor of Rodbaston, in Staffordshire. The name of William Colesone occurs frequently in local deeds of this time, and he held lands, &c., in Walsale

and Rushale, to the value of £10 yearly. He married Elizabeth Gifford, widow of William Boweles of Rushale, and afterwards Alice of Baysover.

THE CHI  
—  
Rushall MS.

A second chantry was founded by Sir Thomas Aston of Tixall, in 14 Rich. II. (1390-1), but it did not receive the Royal Licence until 20 Rich. II. (1396.) By an Inquisition taken at Lichfield, before Adomar de Lichefield, the escheator of the king, on the Monday after the feast of the exaltation of the Holy Cross, 19 Rich. II. (1396), Sir Thomas Aston, the elder, of Haywood, had licence granted to appropriate two messuages, one toft, eight acres of land, one of meadow, and five of pasture, and two shillings rents of Richard de Alderwich, with divers others two shillings rents, &c., amounting to 21s., and a moiety of three messuages, three acres of meadow, and one of pasture in Walsale, Russhehale, Caldemore, Gorscote, and Alderwich, held of the Earl of Warwick, Thomas de Beauchamp, by unknown services, to found a chantry in the said church, and for Robert Mareschall, then chaplain, and his successors, to celebrate mass therein for the fraternity of the Guild of St. John the Baptist for ever, in part satisfaction of ten marks of land and rent held of the king, &c. The above grant was confirmed by Royal Licence, dated at Westminster, November 4th, 20 Rich. II. (1396.) In 5 Henry IV. (1403), additional lands were granted for the same chantry.

Inq. ad quod  
dam.

Walsale  
Chartulary

Ibid.

Sir Thomas Aston, of Haywood and Leigh, was a Knight of the shire and High Sheriff of Staffordshire, in 10 Henry IV. By his marriage with Elizabeth de Leigh, he inherited a third part of that manor and also the Mansion of Parkhall, where the Aston family resided until they became the possessors of Tixall.

Hist. of Tix  
p. 120.

A third chantry was founded in 15 Rich. II. (1391), by Sir Roger Hillary, of Bescote, for a chaplain to celebrate mass daily at the altar of the Blessed Mary in the Church of All Saints, Walsale, for the good estate of the said Roger while living and

Walsale  
Chartulary

**THE CHURCH.** for his soul after death, and for the souls of his  
 1403. ancestors and all the faithful deceased. The founda-  
 — tion was endowed with two messuages, thirty-six  
 acres of land, ten acres of meadow, and two shillings  
 rent, with appurtenances in Walshale, Shelfield, and  
 Rushale. In 1553, the pensions paid to the incumbents  
 of Hillary's Chantry were as follows:—To Richard  
**Valor** Harte, £5 13s. 4d.; Thomas Bowrne, Richard Parker,  
**Ecclesiasticus.** and Richard Bradley, £5 each.

**Inq. ad quod** From an Inquisition taken at Stafford before  
**dam.** William de Walshale, the king's escheator, on October  
 31st, 1403, it appears that Sir Thomas Aston sought  
 a fresh licence to appropriate for his chantry 4  
 messuages, 18 acres of land, 4 of meadow, and a  
 moiety of 11 acres of pasture, 1 of wood, 1 of moor,  
 and 7s. rent, with appurtenances in Walshale, Rushale,  
 Allerwych, Barre, Ruggeley, Esynton, Bromley  
 Regis, Fynchespath, Parva Stonhale, Norton Subter  
 Cannock, and Aston Juxta Colfield, in part of  
 the ten marks of land before mentioned. Full  
 particulars of all these lands are given at length  
 in the Inquisition, and the gift was confirmed by  
 Royal Licence, on February 7th of the following  
 year, when it was valued at 48s. 8d. per annum.  
**Walshale** This grant was a second time confirmed by the  
**Chartulary.** king, on September 9th, when staying at his castle  
 of Tuttebury. It confers lands, tenements, and  
 rents of the value of 10 marks per annum, on Henry  
 Wynde, chaplain, and his successors, to celebrate  
 mass in the Church of Walshall, for the good estate  
 of the masters and guardians of St. John's Guild,  
 for all and each of the brothers and sisters of the  
 same, whilst living, and for their souls after their  
 departure from this life, as well as for those of the  
 same fraternity lately slain at the Battle near Salop,  
 and all the faithful deceased for ever. From this  
 it would appear that some of the brethren of the  
 above Guild had taken part in the fatal field of  
 Shrewsbury (1403), and also that they fought on  
 the Royalist side.

A fourth chantry was founded in the 26th Henry VI. (1448), by Thomas Mollesley and Henry Flaxale, who obtained Royal Licence to found a chantry "for two chaplains to celebrate daily mass at the altar of St. John the Baptist, in the Parish Church of St. Mary of Walshale, for the good estate of the king and his beloved consort the Queen of England, and William, Marquis and Earl of Suffolk, and Isabel his wife, whilst living, and for their souls after death, and for the souls of Henry, late Duke of Warwick, and their predecessors and successors; also for the brethren and sisters of the Guild of St. John the Baptist in Walshale, and for the souls of all the faithful departed." This Licence, unlike all the others, is expressed to have been granted by authority of Parliament.

THE CHURCH.

1448.

Inq. ad quon-  
dam.

Cal. 81.

Whalesale  
Charterary.

William de la Pole, Earl, Marquis, and afterwards Duke of Suffolk, was Prime Minister of England in 1445, and was a great favourite with Henry VI. and his wife, Margaret of Anjou. In 1449 he became unpopular with the House of Commons, was banished the country, and finally murdered at sea in May, 1450. His first wife, Alice, was a grand-daughter of Geoffrey Chaucer, the poet.

Paston Letters,  
v. i, p. 33.

A fifth chantry was founded by Sir Richard Vernon and John Barnard about the 19 Henry VI. (1440-1), and in 1553 Thomas Dobson, the then incumbent, received £6. In the Harl. MS. is an entry relative to this chantry: "John de la Haye, rector of, &c. Whereas William Spernors gave to me and others all his lands, rents, and services, and the advowson of a chantry in Rushale and Wallesall, co. Staff. Know ye that I have granted," &c. Sir Richard Vernon, of Haddon Hall, in Derbyshire, was Speaker of the Parliament held at Leicester in 4 Henry VI. He was also treasurer of Calais, and died in 1452. His grand-son, Sir Henry Vernon, whose name is also found in connection with the chantry, was governour to Prince Arthur. This Sir Henry gave the great bell to Tong Church. He died in 1511.

Topographer,  
v. ii, p. 12.Lyon's  
"Magna  
Britannia."

THE CHURCH.

1547.

Willis's "Hist.  
of Abbeys,"  
v. ii, p. 221.

A sixth benefaction was the Teuxhall chantry, but when or by whom it was founded is not known. In 1553 Edward Hill was the incumbent, and he received as his pension £6.

Another chantry is recorded to have been founded in Walsall Church by one of the Mountfort family.

Hume, v. ii,  
pp. 179, 180.

The subsequent history of the Walsall chantries possesses several points of extreme interest. In that destructive religious wave by which the eighth Henry, in the latter years of his reign, overthrew so many of the lesser monastic and other charities of the land, those of Walsall managed to remain unsuppressed. But it was not for long, for in 1 Ed. VI. (1547), an Act was passed, in spite of Cranmer and others, by which all the remaining endowments of convents, chapels, and chantries became the property of the Crown. The revenue thus obtained was to be devoted

Pict. Hist., v. ii,  
p. 467.

to the building of almshouses, grammar schools, hospitals, and to the increase of the clergy in poor parishes, &c. In point of fact it was far otherwise, and in numerous instances the rapacity of the nobles was gratified by the grant of lands belonging to the dissolved chantries. On the accession of Ed. VI. in 1547, John Dudley, the then lord of the manor, was created Earl of Warwick, and obtained possession of the rectory of Walsall "with its tythes and all its appurtenances" (p. 94). He appears to have received the chantry lands in common with those belonging to Wolverhampton Collegiate Church. On the death of Dudley in 1553, his estates and endowments were confiscated, and at this time the inhabitants of the town determined if possible to secure a portion of these valuable possessions for themselves. A petition was conveyed to London by two prominent citizens, Nicholas Hawe and George Hawe, with the request that the chantry lands should for the future be devoted to the purposes set forth in the Act of 1 Ed. VI., and that the Queen would be graciously pleased to found a Grammar School for the permanent benefit of the town. This, as we shall see later,

Oliver, p. 64.

received the Royal assent, and the school was endowed with lands previously belonging to the Guild of St. John. The Manor of Bascote and an estate at Long Itchington, also lands belonging to the same Guild, were granted to the town by Queen Elizabeth in 1616. Such are the scanty details which survive of the once wealthy chantries of the old church. In 1553 pensions amounting to about £6 each were still paid to eight priests, but in former times their numbers must have been quite half as many again.

We may here conveniently notice the two Ecclesiastical Guilds, which have already been spoken of in connection with the chantries. The word "Guild" is derived from the Saxon "gildan" to pay, and meant "a fraternity, which applied its property in common and afforded mutual help in times of poverty and trouble." In many respects they resembled our modern friendly societies, where members make small payments and are buried at the expense of the fund. In addition to this their character was more or less of a religious kind, and they generally had a special altar at the church of the parish, where a priest of the order was appointed to sing mass daily. Turner says, "there was much good fellowship connected with them, and at their meetings conviviality was not forgotten." Practically their history is of much importance, as in many instances, that of Lichfield among others, they were the origin of corporations, which name did not come into use until about the time of Henry VI. Guilds were abolished by the same Act, which in 1545 swept away the remaining chantries, hospitals, and fraternities of the country, and their possessions were confiscated after the same manner. The earliest mention we have of the Guild of St. John the Baptist, is in 14 Rich. II. (1390). In 1416 a grant was made of a third part of a burgage in High Street, Walshale, adjoining to a burgage belonging to the same Guild. During the next few years various other grants were made, from which it appears that

THE CHURCH.  
1547.  
—

Lomax. "Hist.  
of Lichfield,"  
pp. 70, 80.

Walshale  
Chartulary.

Cal. of Deeds,  
30.

THE CHURCH. the Guild possessed property at the following places  
 1469. among others, Bradeley, Woodend, Little Bloxwich,  
 Calendar of Wolverhampton, Bascote, Bentley, Wheaton Aston,  
 Deeds. Walshale, Leamore, Harden, and Great Bloxwich.  
 The Altar of the Guild stood in St. Clement's Chapel  
 or north transept, and two or more priests were  
 maintained for the performance of the duties in con-  
 nection with it.

Ibid, 40. In the time of Henry VI. (about 1440), a "code  
 of laws" was formulated by the authorities, the  
 latter part having special reference to the management  
 of the Guilds, which appear to have fallen into  
 disorder and disgrace. This code is given subse-  
 quently, and deserves a careful perusal.

Ibid, 67, 82. In the Town Records are two ancient documents,  
 entitled "Roll of Accounts of the Masters and  
 Brethren of the Guild of St. John Baptist." The  
 first extends from 1469 (8 Ed. IV.) to 1495 (10  
 Henry VII.), the second for the succeeding ten years.  
 These Rolls contain the yearly accounts of the  
 Masters of the Guild, together with the payments  
 and receipts. The minute details are, however, not  
 stated. Several distinguished men were attached to  
 the Guild about this time. Edward V. was a member,  
 and was admitted in the 22nd year of his father's  
 reign. The names of Elizabeth Wydeville his mother,  
 and Antony Wydeville his father, are also found  
 among the members. This seems to have been a  
 common custom at the time, for in the neighbouring  
 Guild of Lichfield, were such magnates as Henry  
 Harwood, VII., his Queen, and Prince Arthur, with others of  
 pp. 304, 344. like position. They were evidently joining members,  
 whose patronage and support had been solicited.

Calendar of Another document gives "The names of the  
 Deeds, 89. Bretherne and (Sisterhood?) of the Guild of St. John  
 Baptist off Walshall made be William . . . and  
 Richard Hopkys theis beyng masters off the Gylde  
 made be them yn the yere off oure lorde MDXXXI (?)"  
 (23 Henry VIII.) This deed probably belongs to an  
 earlier date. In 2 Henry VIII. (1510-11), the master

and brethren agree with the wardens of St. Clement's Chapel in the Church of Walsall to forfeit to them the sum of 20s., if they should neglect to keep an anniversary or obit for the soul of Sir Edward Canwalle, John Canwalle, and Agnes, his wife, on the 2nd November yearly.

THE CHURCH.  
1404.

Calendar of  
Deeds, 84.

But little information is preserved of the Guild of St. Mary, though in the "Code of Laws," and in various deeds, there is distinct allusion made to it. It was doubtless connected with the chantry of the same name at the principal altar of the church, "under the cross," but in point of possessions and importance it was obviously the lesser of the two Guilds.

Ibid., 45, 53, 54,  
&c.

Passing once more to the history of the church, we may just notice a grant made in 6 Henry IV. (1404-5), made by Henry Wynde, of Walshale, chaplain (mentioned in the licence for the foundation of Aston's Chantry), and William Hogets, of the same, to the wardens of the fabric of All Saints, of Walshale, of an annual rent of 40<sup>d</sup>. for lands at "Byrchzatefeld" and "le longmedowe."

Ibid., 34, 35.

From the Inq. Post Mortem for 8 Henry IV. (1406-7), we find that "Margaret, who was the wife of Thomas de Beauchamp, lately Earl of Warwick, held part of the manor and the advowson of the church," &c.

Record Office.

The accounts of the churchwardens are preserved so far back as the year 1462. In the Town Chest is a volume entitled "Accounts of the Guardians of the Church of All Saints, Walsall, from Innocents' Day (December 28), 2 Ed. IV. (1462), to St. Andrew's Day (November 30), 26 Henry VIII. (1534)." This is earlier than those of All Saints', Derby, which commence in 1465, and are the earliest with which Mr. Cox, the church historian of Derbyshire, is acquainted. This rare volume was rediscovered when the old town chest was cleared out at the building of the new Guild Hall, and was probably placed there during the troubles of the Civil War.

From 1534 to 1633 the accounts are missing. For this latter year we still have left "the Accompt

Calendar of  
Deeds, 261,  
art. 16.



THE CHURCH. of William Bayley and John Walton, churchwardens,"  
 1502. June 3rd, 1633. Here again there is a blank until  
 — 1684, when from this date until 1793 they are  
 contained in an old folio volume in the church,  
 entitled "Churchwardens', Overseers' and Constables'  
 Accounts and Appointments."

alendar of  
 Deeds, 83.

In 17 Henry VII. (1502), John Arundel, Bishop of  
 Coventry and Lichfield, declares by an "ordeynance"  
 under the Episcopal seal directed to the "Maior  
 and his bredren," that in honour of the holy and  
 undivided Trinity, the Blessed Mary and All Saints,  
 and for the advantage of Walsall Church, they "shal  
 kepe ther drynkynges iiij. tymes in the yere, and  
 hee that is absent at ony of those drynkynges, to  
 forfeit a pounce of waxe to burne for the light of  
 the chapell of Saynte Kateryn in the sayd church.  
 Item, the wardens shall cause the priste to geve  
 monycon bothe in the Church of Walsale and in  
 the Chapell of Bloxwyche IV days before every  
 drynkyng, under the like forfeit of a pounce of  
 waxe to the sayd altar." This curious document  
 will be again noticed.

Record Office.

In 27 Henry VIII. (1535-6), that great eccle-  
 siastical survey called the "Valor Ecclesiasticus"  
 was completed, and the first fruits and tenths  
 hitherto forwarded to Rome were now transferred  
 to the Crown. This great work is in six folio  
 volumes, the third of which contains a map of the  
 diocese of Lichfield and Coventry, and particulars  
 regarding the Churches of Walsall and Rushall.  
 Walsall is noted as being a Vicarage, and as having  
 10 Chantries.

The following entries give the valuation and  
 extent of the church and chantry property at this  
 time:—

Vol. iii, p. 149.

"Dn's John Turnor, Vicar of the Parish Church of Walsall, appropri-  
 ated by the Abbot and Convent of Hales Owen, Co. Salop. Has and receives  
 of lands, glebe, tythes, offerings and other spiritual emoluments per annum  
 (pter et ultra), over and above viij<sup>s</sup>. viij<sup>d</sup>. paid annually to the Abbot  
 and Convent aforesaid. And besides xiii<sup>s</sup>. viij<sup>d</sup>. paid to the Archdeacon of

Stafford, for sinodals and procurations. And over ii<sup>s</sup>. iiid. to the lord THE CHURCH. Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, for his procurations in common years. And over xviii<sup>s</sup>. iiid. annually distributed to xi priests and poor within the town of Walsall, for the soul of John Harper, "per compositiones."

1535.

"Total £x xixs. xd. Tythes thence xxi<sup>s</sup>. xi<sup>d</sup>."

#### CHANTRIES IN WALSALL.

1.—Dom: Wm. Starysmore, chantry priest of the chantry donative, founded in the Parish Church of Walsall, by the gift of Sir Wm. Spernors. Holds annually to himself and his successors in Shelfield, Rushall, and Walsall, over and above the rent payable annually to the lord the king, and to Anthony Kyngston, for chief rent.

"£6 13s. 4d. Tythes from thence 13s. 4d."

2.—Dom: Thomas Brodbotham, chantry priest of the chantry in the said church, founded by Sir Roger Hillary. Has and takes to himself and his successors annually from lands and tenements in Walsall above the rent payable annually to the chief lord.

"£4 3s. 2d. Tythes from thence 8s. 4d."

3.—Dom: Thomas Flemyng, chantry priest of the chantry of the same foundation there. Holds and takes for himself and his successors annually from lands and tenements in Walsall, over and above the rent payable annually to the chief lord.

"£4 6s. 8d. Tythes thence 8s. 8d."

4.—Dom: Thomas Bowrne, chantry priest of the chantry at Bloxwich, in the parish of Walsall, founded by the same Roger Hillary. Holds for himself and his successors for lands and tenements in Esyngton and Typnynton, in the Co. of Stafford, over and above the rent payable annually to the chief lord.

"£5 0s. 0d. Tythes thence 10s. 0d."

5.—Magister Robert Dore, chantry priest of the chantry founded in the aforesaid Church of Walsall by Sir Henry Vernon and John Beamownte, Esq. Holds, &c., in the demesne of Walsall, Rushall, and Bentley, Co. Stafford, above the rent payable annually to the chief lord.

"£4 13s. 4d. Tythes thence 9s. 4d."

6.—Dom: Peter Clayton, chantry priest of the chantry founded in the said church by gift of Aston, Knt. Holds, &c., in Walsall, Shenstone, Rushall, and Esyngton, Co. Staff., over and above, &c.

"£3 14s. 5d. Tythes thence 7s. 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>d."

7.—Dom: Thomas Smyth, chantry priest of the chantry there founded by the master or custodian of the Gilde of Walsall aforesaid. Holds, &c., in Rushall, Walsall, Alderliche, Bromwyche, Typnynton, Wynton, and Goodsall, Staff., over and above, &c., to the chief lords.

"£3 11s. 4d. Tythes thence 7s. 1d. ob' q'."

THE CHURCH. "8.—Dom: Henry Hyncks, chantry priest of the chantry in Walsall,  
1535. founded by Thomas Moysley, gentleman. Holds, &c., in Shystoke, in Co.  
— War., &c.

"£5 Os. Od. Tythes thence 10s. Od."

"9.—D'n's William Rydware, chantry priest of the chantry founded there by Thomas Knyght, gentleman. Holds, &c., in Walsall, Bromwyche, Weddesbury, Rushall, Shenstone, Bromeley Regis, Alderwas, Rugeley, Norton, and Wyrley, in Staff., &c., to the chief lords.

"£3 6s. 1d. Tithes thence 6s. 7½d."

"10.—Dom: Roger Bobett, chantry priest of the chantry founded by John Flaxall, gentleman. Holds, &c., in Walsall and Pyrry Barre, above &c., to the chief lord there.

"£5 Os. Od. Tithes thence 10s. Od."

V. iii, p. 206.

In the list of possessions of Hales Owen Abbey is "Walsall et Pessall (Pelsall) cum membris."

"Worth per ann. in rents of assize £4 5s. 6½d."

Ibid, 207.

The Rectory of Walsall is worth per annum, and is so demised at the rent (ad firmam) of £10.

From the total of the value of the possessions of Hales, we find "deduct to the wardens (gardianis) of the Church of Walsall for chief rent 5s."

Ibid, 118.

In the catalogue of Prebendaries within the Deanery of the Collegiate Church of Stafford we find:

#### PREBEND OF WALSALL.

Sampson Lord Clerk, Prebendary, takes thence:

			s.	d.		
From Arable Land there	...	7	5	}	s.	d.
" Meadow " "	...	8	0		26	8
" Pasture " "	...	11	3			
Tithes. 2s. 8d.						

Ibid, 140.

We may note as a final extract: "D'n's Henry Lydell, priest of a chantry founded in Lichfield Cathedral by John Gotton, and endowed with lands in Walsall."

Record Office.

The "Inventory of Church Goods," &c., taken in 6 Ed. VI. (1552-3), has preserved to us a list of the ornaments and property of the church in that year. The nature and object of this Inventory is stated by Fuller in his "Church History," from

which it appears that a great deal of plate and costly church furniture had escaped the destruction of the chantries, and had fallen into private hands. Commissioners were therefore issued out to every county to examine what ornaments were still left in the hands of the wardens, and to convert whatever was superfluous or superstitious to the king's use. The Commissioners for Staffordshire were, Walter Viscount Hereford, Lord Ferrers of Chartley, Sir Thomas Giffard, Sir Thomas Fitzherbert, Sir Edward Ashton, Edward Lyttleton and Walter Wrottesley, Esqs., most of them High Sheriffs of the County. They commenced their mission in September, 1552, and seem to have made their returns in April or May following.

THE CHURCH  
1552.  
—

For this portion of the county the "Inventorie" states :

## HUNDREDUM DE OFFELEY.

"A juste trewe and a parfett survey and inventorie of all goodes, plate, juelles, vestements, belles, and other ornaments of all churches, chappels, brotherheddes, gyldes, fraternities, and compenes within the Hundreth of Offeley, in the Countie of Stafford, taken the seventh day of October, in the sixte yere of the reigne of our Sovereign Lord Kynge, Edward the Sixte, by Thomas Gyfford and Thomas Fitzharbert, Knyghts, and Walter Wrottesley, Esquior, by virtue of the Kynges Majesties Comission to them directed in that behalfe as hereafter perticularly appereth."

## WALSALLE.

"Fyrste, one challes of sylver parcell gylte with a paten, threy coopes of whyte branched damaske with the vestements of sylke and albes for the priste, deacon, and subdiacon, of the same coloure; iii copes of cremesyn sylke with the vestements of the same and albes for the pryste, deacon, and subdeacon, belonging to the same; one cope of red fustian in aplis and the vestement of the same with the albe to hit, one vestement of whyte satten with the albe to hit, one vestement of dyverse coloures of dornex, iii frounts for the alter, iii alter clothes, iii towelles, ii corporases, ii banner clothes, ii cruets of leade, a crosse of copper and gylte, a paxe of tynne, ii candyl styks of brasse, one sacrynge bell, a sanctus bell, and iiii other bella.

"M<sup>d</sup>. that the vte bell was broken syns the makinge of the fyrste Inventorie, and by the hole consent of the parishe the same was solde to the amendement of divers brydges and hyghways abowte ther towne, whiche wer verey noysome to the Kynges people passinge that way.

"M<sup>d</sup>. that Richard Forsett the Kinges survear had all the reste of the ornaments, plate, and juells belonging to the sayd church of Walsalle.

THE CHURCH.  
1552-1590.

"M<sup>r</sup>. delyvered by the Right Honorable Walter Vicounte Hereforde, Lorde Ferers of Chartley, Thomas Fitharbert, Knight, and Edwarde Littleton, esquier, Comissionars for Churche goodes within the Counti of Stafford, to John Dawson and William Gorway, Churchwardens there, on Chales of silver with a Patent parcell gilte, ii Lynen clothes for the Holli Comunion Table, a Surples for the Curat to minestre with, iiiii belles in the Stepull and a Sanctus Bell saffeli to be kepte untill the Kinges Majesties pleasure be therin furder knowen. In wittenes whereof as well We the sayd Comissionars as the sayd Churchwardens to thes presents interchaungenably have putte our handes the xiiiith of May, Anno Regni Regis Edwardi Sexti Septimo."

Indorsed "Walsall."

#### BLOXWICHE.

"Fyrste, ii belles onelyc remeyn ther.

"M<sup>r</sup>. that Richard Forset survear hade ye reste of the ornaments belongyng to the sayd chappell.

"M<sup>r</sup>. delivered by the Right Honorable Walter Vicounte Hereforde, Lorde Ferers of Chartley, Thomas Fitharbert, Knight, and Edwarde Lyttleton, esquier, Comissionars for Churche goodes within the Counti of Stafford, to Roger Penson, Chapell Warden there, ii belles in the stepull, saffeli to be kepte untill the Kinges Majesties pleasure be therein furder knowen. In wittenes wherof as well we the sayd Comissionars as the sayd Churchwardens to thes presents interchangeabli have putte our handes the xiiiith of May, Anno Regni Regis Edwardi Sexti Septimo."

Indorsed "Bloxwiche."

Willis's "Hist.  
of Abbeys,"  
v. ii, p. 221.

In the year 1553 the following pensions were paid to incumbents of chantries in Walsall:

ASTON'S CHANTRY.—To William Ridway and Sampson Borne, incumbents, £6 each.

HILLARY'S CHANTRY.—To Richard Harte £5 13s. 4d.; Thomas Borne, Richard Parker, and Richard Bradley, incumbents, £5 each.

TEUXHALL CHANTRY.—To Edward Hill, incumbent, £6.

VERNON'S AND BERNARD'S CHANTRY.—To Thomas Dobson, incumbent, £6.

Calendar of  
Deeds, 126.

Ibid, 129, 131.

In 1583, Sir Edward Leighe purchases for £15 some lands given for the maintenance of a light or obit in the Church of Walsall. A like obit was also given by the Moseleys, of Bascote.

Rushall MS.

In the year 1590, Henry Leigh, of Rushall, who was godchild to the king, and as an old chronicle says, "died out of his wills," purchased the Rectory of Walsall from Robert Balthorpe, of the City of London, which rectory he conveyed to his cousin

named Manwaring and his cousin Shilton, "to raise portions for his younger children." THE CHURCH  
1613-1639.

For many years from this time, we hear but little of the church. The chantries had disappeared, and their revenues become dissipated, while the fabric itself must have suffered neglect and decay. But men soon began to rally round the sacred structure, and many gifts and charities were made to the ministers, the church itself, and the poor of the parish.

In 1613, William Parker left funds "to pay yearly the sum of £20 to a minister to serve the cure in the Chapel of Great Bloxwich, and also money for the repairs of the chapel and chapel house." Benefaction  
Tables.

About 1618, William Wheate, of the City of Coventry, devised £20 to buy land, "the rent whereof to be given for preaching four sermons yearly in Walsall Church," &c. Ibid.

In 1620, John Parker gave amongst other gifts, "for the preaching of sixteen sermons, £8 yearly, 10s. a sermon, four in the Parish Church of Walsall, four in Rushall, and eight in the Chapel of Bloxwich; also 40s. yearly for keeping in order the said chapel and chapel yard," &c.

In 1624, Robert Parker bequeathed £100, "to pay £4 yearly at Christmas to the organ player in Walsall Church, and 20s. to his man who bloweth the bellows;" also funds for the maintenance of a clock at Bloxwich Chapel and other purposes. About this time also, Sir William Craven gave £50, John Parker £30, and Robert Parker £20, to make new seats in Walsall Church.

In 1627, Nicholas Parker left "towards repairing the Parish Church of Walsall £2," &c. Ibid.

In 1639, Henry Stone (uncle to Capt. Henry Stone) left "for the repairs of Walsall Church and of the gallery therein, which he had erected, £3, and for a sermon to be preached monthly by an orthodox Protestant minister of the Church of England, the first Tuesday in every month £3," with other

**THE CHURCH.** | charitable gifts. Various other benefactions were  
 1642-1648. given about this time, and are recorded by Glew in  
 — his account of the charities.

In 1642 broke out the great Civil War, in the early part of which Walsall appears to have taken a strongly loyal course, and for this fidelity the church and town afterwards suffered considerably. Tradition relates that the church was at this time converted into a stable by the Oliverian troops, the organ was pulled down and burnt, together with the prayerbooks of the church, in the Market Place. The monuments and carvings were mutilated, and the stained glass windows with their armorial bearings were destroyed at the same time.

In 1654, tablets were set up in the church commemorating the various gifts and charities existing before the war broke out. Some of these are still preserved in the church, and may be detected and read by the sharp-eyed antiquary.

Calendar of  
 Deeds, 241.

In 24 Chas. I. (1648), a complaint was made by the inhabitants of Bloxwich and Walsall, against the Company of Merchant Taylors of London, respecting the nonpayment of the arrears of certain annuities bequeathed by William and Robert Parker, "for keeping in repair a Chapel of ease at Great Bloxwich, and providing a stipend for a minister there, and for finding a man to play the organs in Walsall Church."

t Coll., v. i,  
 p. 378.

In a settlement of their estates made by indenture on May 20th, 1686, by Sir Thomas Wilbraham and Elizabeth his wife, the advowson of the vicarage, together with the Manor of Walsall and other lands in the neighbourhood, were settled upon their daughter Mary, wife of the Hon. Richard Newport and their heirs. By a similar indenture dated October 29th, 1763, the advowson was conveyed to Diana Lady Mountrath, lady of the manor, and on the death, unmarried, of her son and heir Charles Henry, last Earl of Mountrath, it passed finally, with the manor, into the hands of the Bridgeman family.

## LIST OF INCUMBENTS.

THE CHURCH.  
1211-1348.

The following list of Incumbents of the Church is necessarily incomplete, although, taking into consideration the fact that they embrace a period of nearly 700 years, it is far more perfect than we might reasonably expect:—

DATE OF INSTITUTION.	RECTORS.	PATRON.	
1211 ...	MAGISTER SERLO DE SUNNING .. This is the first Rector who is mentioned. He was one of King John's Chaplains, and his name also occurs in the Plea Rolls 7 Henry III. (1223-23), when a claim to the advowson was unsuccessfully brought forward by William Ruffus, then lord of the manor. He still held possession of it in 12 Henry III.	KING JOHN.	Plea Roll.
June 3, 1244 ...	OSBERT DE MAIDENSTAN ... He was Chaplain of the King.	HENRY III.	Patent Roll.
June 21, 1247...	MAGISTER VINCENT ... Master Vincent was the last Rector. He was the companion and master of Aymar, the brother of the king. He was Incumbent in 1248, when the church was granted to the Abbey of Hales.	HENRY III.	Ibid.
VICARS.			
— ...	FRATER GALFREIDUS ... d. 1309.	ABBOT OF HALES.	Episcopal Registers of Lichfield.
June 10, 1309...	THOMAS DE HALES, ABBOT ... He was Vicar of Wednesbury in 1301. Admitted at London.	ABBOT OF HALES.	
-- ...	FRATER THOMAS CAMPION ... He resigned in 1315.	ABBOT OF HALES.	
Dec. 22, 1315...	FRATER HENRICUS DE DERHAM ... He was a Monk of the Abbey.	ABBOT OF HALES.	
Nov. 27, 1316...	FRATER THOMAS, CANON OF HALES ... Admitted at Aston.	ABBOT OF HALES.	
— ...	FRATER THOMAS CAMPION ... He resigned in 1332.	ABBOT OF HALES.	
Sept. 14, 1332...	FRATER THOMAS DE NORTHLECH ... He was also a Monk of Hales.	ABBOT OF HALES.	
— ...	FRATER THOMAS BECK ... d. 1341.	ABBOT OF HALES.	
Mar. 18, 1341...	FRATER BARTHOLOMEW DE BOBYNTON... Canon of Hales. Admitted at Haywood. Resigned 1348.	ABBOT OF HALES.	



	DATE OF INSTITUTION.	VICARS.	PATRON.
THE CHURCH.	Feb. 1, 1348...	FRATER NICHOLAUS DE DRAYTON ... Also Canon of Hales. Admitted at Hay- wood. Died 1360.	ABBOT OF HALES.
1348-1574.			
Episcopal Registers.	Dec. 20, 1360...	FRATER WILLIAM BRUMMESGREVE ... Monk of Hales. He was created Abbot of Hales in 1366, and resigned his Vicarage of Walsale.	ABBOT OF HALES.
	April 28, 1366...	FRATER RICHARD DE BRUGE .. Canon of Hales. In 1368 he was recalled by the Abbot to Hales Owen, and placed under restraint, "to undergo certain mon- astic discipline, for misdemeanours com- mitted by him." In 1371 he was finally superseded.	ABBOT OF HALES.
	July 17, 1371...	FRATER WILLIELMUS DE STOKE ... Canon of Hales. Died 1375.	ABBOT OF HALES.
	July 23, 1375...	FRATER ADAM VAUS ... Canon of Hales. Died 1376.	ABBOT OF HALES.
	May 24, 1376...	FRATER WILLIELMUS DE BERMYNCHAM... Canon of Hales. Died 1413.	ABBOT OF HALES.
	Oct. 11, 1413...	FRATER HENRICUS DE KYDERMINSTER... He was Prior of Sandwell in 1361. In 1422 he was created Abbot of Hales, and resigned his living.	ABBOT OF HALES.
		PERPETUAL VICARS.	
	Dec. 28, 1422...	FRATER THOMAS WALSALE ... Canon of Hales. Resigned in 1430.	ABBOT OF HALES.
	Feb. 26, 1430...	FRATER RICARDUS WOPFELDE ... Canon of Hales. Died in 1468.	ABBOT OF HALES.
	Jan. 25, 1458...	FRATER THOMAS NECHELIS ... Canon of Hales. Resigned 1462.	ABBOT OF HALES.
	Feb. 4, 1462...	FRATER JOHANNES COMBER ... Canon of Hales. He is a witness to two deeds in the Walsall Calendar, in the years 1468 and 1469.	ABBOT OF HALES.
	— ...	FRATER HENRICUS EGGEBANTON ... Resigned in 1499.	ABBOT OF HALES.
	Dec. 15, 1489...	JOHANNES SEED ... Canon of Hales. He is mentioned in the Sneyd Roll. Died 1490.	ABBOT OF HALES.
	May 11, 1499...	DOM: WILLIELMUS TAYLOR ...	ABBOT OF HALES.
	— ...	JOHANNES TURNER .. He was Vicar in 1536, and is mentioned in the "Valor Ecclesiasticus." He died in 1609.	—
	Nov. 11, 1569...	ROBERT WESTON ... Resigned in 1574.	GEORGE CLARKSON.
	Mar. 12, 1574...	ROBERTUS WILSON ... William Ward is said by Shaw to have signed the Register as Vicar in 1571. There is no record of this in the Register, nor was it customary at that early time.	GEORGE CLARKSON.

PERPETUAL VICARS.

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DATE OF INSTITUTION.	PERPETUAL VICARS.	PATRON.	THE CHURCH.
—	... HENRY GREEN ... .. He is mentioned in the old Register as being Vicar of Walsall. He was buried at St. Matthew's, October 23rd, 1638.	—	1638-1769.
—	... THOMAS BYRDALL, M.A. ... .. His name is mentioned in a table of bene- factions set up in 1634. He married Helen, widow of William Persehouse, of Hurst Hill. He was the author of two books, "A Glympse of God," published 1663, and dedicated to Sir Thomas Wilbraham and Lady Elizabeth, his wife; the preface is by a Clergyman named W. Gearing. This gentleman states that Mr. Byrdall was presented to the living by Sir Richard Wilbraham, 1st Baronet. The second book was a volume of Eighteen Sermons, preached in Walsall Church, and published in 1666. It is dedicated as the former, and is prefaced by a Funeral Discourse, by Anthony Burgess, Minister of Sutton Cold- field, in which the age of the deceased is supposed to be 53. Shaw assumes that Mr. Byrdall was inducted to the living before the religious troubles of the time, and that, when in 1643 the Act was passed, which substituted the "Directory for Pub- lic Worship" for the "Book of Common Prayer," he assented to the change. This statement appears to rest solely upon supposition, and he seems also to have died on April 30th, 1662, just before the passing of the Act of Uniformity. In a volume entitled "A Testimony of the Ministers in the Co. of Stafford to the Truth of Jesus Christ, and to the Solemn League and Covenant, &c., London, 1648," it gives "Thomas Byrdall, Minister of God's Word at Walsall; Francis Stone, Schoolmaster at Walsall." He was re- puted a popular preacher, a scholar, and a man of most estimable virtue.	... SIR RICHARD WILBRAHAM.	Salt Coll., v. v, pt. 11, pp. 61, 234.
1662	... RICHARD BOURNE, M.A. ... .. He was Prebendary of Oloughton, in War- wickshire, which then belonged to Lichfield Cathedral. The value of the Prebend was 24 l. 4s. 4d. He died or resigned in 1667.	—	Harwood, "Lichfield," p. 239.
1687	... THOMAS DICKEN ... ..	—	Town Records.
1708	... REV. JOHN MOSS .. .. He died in 1733, and was buried in the North Chancel.	—	
1733	... REV. ROBERT FELTON ... .. He died at the Vicarage in 1769, and was buried near the Vestry, at the entrance of the south-west wall, where a monument was erected to his memory, which bears the following inscription, "Near this place lie the remains of Robert Felton, Vicar of this Parish near six and thirty years; born and educated at Newport, in the County of Salop, from whence he went to Oxford, and was some time a Com- moner of Magdalen Hall, where he took a Bachelor's Degree; from thence he retired into Shropshire, where he was sent for by the Right Honourable Mary, Countess of Bradford, who generously gave him this living, without his know- ledge or application. "Ob. 29 April Æt 64."	... LADY BRADFORD.	

DATE OF INSTITUTION.	PERPETUAL VICARS.	PATRON.
THE CHURCH. Sept., 1769 ... 1769-1837. —	REV. JOHN DARWALL .. ...  He was Curate of the Church, and was made Vicar in 1769. He was the author of a book entitled "Discourse on Spiritual Improvement from Affliction." It was printed in Walsall by F. Milward, in 1780, and is dedicated to the Earl of Mountrath, from whom the author "had experienced the most generous kindness and the tenderest humanity in his afflicted state." He was a good musician, and his name survives in a favorite hymn tune. He died at the Vicarage on December 18th, 1780, and was interred in the "New Burial Ground."	—
June 15, 1700... Marlow MS.	REV. JOHN SIMPSON RUTTER ...  He was Curate for more than ten years, and died suddenly, at the Vicarage, on November 18th, 1703.	—
May 14, 1796...	REV. JOHN DARWALL ...  He was a son of the former Vicar of the same name, and was Lecturer of St. John's Chapel, Deritend, Birmingham.	—
Dec. 3, 1803... Ibid.	REV. PHILIP PRATT ...  He was nephew of Mr. Preston, a favourite and companion of the Earl of Mountrath, and through his influence obtained the appointment. He is described as "a preacher whose discourses were delivered in a dignified, yet unaffected style, and from their piety and eloquence, were calculated to have the desirable tendency of reclaiming the vicious and strengthening the Christian hearer in his faith." He died September 10th, 1822. The following account of his funeral is taken from "Glew's History," and it would appear from it that he was held in high esteem by all his fellow townsmen:—"The corpse was preceded from the Vicarage by the Beadle, Sergeant-at-Mace, and members of the Corporation, in their robes; six Clergymen, and nearly one hundred of the principal inhabitants, all attired in deep mourning, with silk hatbands and gloves (provided at their own expense.) The coffin, resting on a bier, and covered with a pall, was borne by eight bearers, and supported by six relatives of the deceased. The body was taken into the Church, which was densely crowded on the occasion, and service was read in the most affecting manner, by the Rev. Joseph Harting (Curate). It was then interred underneath the north-east porch. No death in Walsall ever excited more genuine sympathy, not only on account of the virtues of the deceased, but his distressed family. The gentlemen attending the funeral afterwards adjourned into the Chancel, and there most cheerfully subscribed, for the benefit of the bereaved widow and orphans, £340 and upwards, to their everlasting honor, humanity, and benevolence."	EARL OF MOUNTRATH.
Glew, p. 123.		
Nov., 1822 ...	REV. JOHN BARON, M.A. ...  He resigned in 1837 on account of ill health, and went to Clifton.	LORD BRADFORD.

DATE OF INSTITUTION.	PERPETUAL VICARS.	PATRON.
1837 ...	REV. GEORGE FISK, M.A. ... He instituted Evening Lectures on Sunday and Thursday. The first of these took place on Nov. 28th, 1837, when the Church was for the first time lighted with gas. The collection on this occasion, made for the purpose of defraying the expenses, amounted to over £24. In 1843, he published "Memorials of a Visit to the Holy Land," and a volume of Sermons. In 1845, he was appointed Vicar of Great Malvern Church. Mr. Fisk is still remembered as an eloquent and powerful preacher.	LORD BRADFORD. THE CHURCH. 1837-1887. —
1845 ...	REV. JOHN HODGES SHARWOOD ... He was one of the founders of "The Pupil Teacher's System," and founder of "The South Staffordshire Schoolmaster's Association." Prior to coming here he was Vicar of Rowley Regis. He died after a ministry of five and twenty years, on April 8th, 1871.	—
Sept. 21, 1871...	THE REV. WILLIAM ALLEN, M.A. ... St. John's College, Cambridge. Vicar of St. George's, Lilleshall, Shropshire, 1857-71. He resigned in 1883, and is now Vicar of Eccleshall, and Prebend of Lichfield Cathedral.	LORD BRADFORD.
Feb. 2, 1883...	THE REV. ROBERT HODGSON, M.A. ... Oriel College, Oxford. Prior to becoming Vicar of Walsall, he had for ten years held the Vicarage of Christ Church, West Bromwich. He is Rural Dean of Walsall, and Surrogate.	LORD BRADFORD.

The value of the living is £410.

## REGISTERS OF CHURCH.

The Registers of the old Church date back to the year 1570. The early volumes are as follows:—

VOL. I.—Bound in old parchment, and fairly well preserved, contains—

Baptisms, ...	1570-1645.
Marriages, ...	1570-1645.
Burials, ...	1570-1645.

The Baptisms in 1570 were 62 in number; the Burials, 50; and the Marriages, 13.

VOL. II.—Baptisms ... March 28th, 1646—March 30th, 1662.

" ... Feb. 9th, 1715 —Dec. 31st, 1784.

Marriages ... May 4th, 1718 —March 14th, 1754.

VOL. III.—Baptisms ... April 1st, 1662 —Feb. 7th, 1715.

Marriages ... Feb. 3rd, 1663 —April 29th, 1718.

Burials ... April 12th, 1662 —Aug. 9th, 1678.

VOL. IX.—Contains the Burials from August 1678-1701. John Blackham, Mayor, signs an entry on the first page, as witness to the first Burial in Woollen.

THE CHURCH.  
1200-1819.

The existing church is either the third or fourth which has been erected upon the present site, and it will be well, before describing its modern state, to consider, as fully as the scanty materials will admit, the buildings which have preceded it.

The date of the earliest church is unknown. It is, however, definitely mentioned in 1st John (1200), and the present Early English crypt may be considered to date from that period.

Charters- Rolls.

In the latter half of the 14th century, there appears strong circumstantial evidence that a much larger building of transition Gothic style was erected, and the main reasons for this theory are as follows:— (1) The lords of the manor at that time were Ralph, last Lord Bassett, and Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, who died in 1401, both wealthy and powerful men. This Earl of Warwick is known to have enlarged and rebuilt during his retirement many of the churches on his various estates, and that he took a direct interest in the church here is shown by the fact that two of the windows bore his arms, and that they were also carved on the stone pulpit and on the existing font. The church contained also two monuments of the Hillarys, both of whom died before 1400, while other coats of arms of Ferrers, of Groby, and the Stafford family, relate to the same time. (2) The general architecture of the church as evidenced by the discovery of an ancient window and other mediæval remains at the time of the restoration in 1879, points to the same date, whilst the enlargement of the building is proved by the fact that the chancel was carried by means of the present massive archway over a public road, which then crossed the churchyard.

Dugdale,  
"Baronage,"  
v. i, p. 390.

From the Churchwardens' Accounts for 1492, we learn that the church was again partly rebuilt, and from this date, with the exception of the addition of a new spire in 1777, and several repairs to the west front, it remained until 1819 without much

further alteration. An old MS. contains the following notes, which may here be well recorded :—

THE CHURCH.  
1819.

"In the year 1785, the new improvements in a place called the Ditch were made, and a new roof was made and completed on the south side of Walsall Church; in doing of which William Sirdeffeld the undertaker of the carpenters' work, lost his life by a wheel going over his leg, which mortified."

"In 1787, a new roof over the vestry and part of the north roof was made and completed at the expense of Walsall Parish, and in 1790, the steps and passages leading to the church were in part paved with stone."

"In 1802, a new wall and additional steps were built and completed in churchyard leading into the Ditch, and a new roof was made over Nock's gallery on the north side of the church."

The plan of the old church prior to its rebuilding in 1819 was cruciform, and consisted of nave, chancel, and large side chapels forming very short transepts, the roofs of which lay east and west and parallel with the body of the church.

Its internal dimensions were as follows :—

Shaw.

			LENGTH.	BREADTH.
			ft. in.	ft. in.
Of Middle Aisle	...	...	92 0	22 1
South Aisle and Maid's Chapel	...	...	92 0	22 0
North Aisle	..	...	92 0	20 8
St. Catherine's Chapel	...	...	27 0	17 2
St. Clement's Chapel	....	...	34 8	17 2
Chancel	...	...	52 6	19 0

The chancel contained eleven stalls on each side. These are still preserved in their original position, and the seats are carved with grotesque figures, no two of which are alike. They appear to have belonged to some monastic building, and were possibly removed to their present position after the dissolution of the old religious houses. Over the communion table was a large painting representing the Lord's Supper. The church contained monuments to the Hillary family, and the windows various coats of arms belonging to the Beauchamp, Stafford, and Hextall families. There are drawings and descriptions of the former in Dugdale's "Visitation," and the arms are both described and delineated by Wirley in his "Church Notes, 1597." The windows were

College of Arms,  
c. 36.

THE CHURCH. all destroyed prior to 1795, when Shaw examined the church. As before stated, this destruction is almost certainly attributable to the Civil War.

The two monuments to the Hillarys, of Bescot, are thus described :

"The figure of the portraitures in brasse, and epitaph upon a tomb of gray marble standing towards the North side of this church.

"En terre sount retournes monsir Roger Hillary, cheif justice del Comen Bank, & Katharine sa feme jadis nomez. .  
Jesu de lour Almes eitz merci pitee se que pur  
lour almes pater noster et Ave Maria dyra  
sys vynts jours de pardon."

Arms: 1. "In a plain bordure three fleurs de liz between six cross-lets fitchée."

2. "Two lions passant."

Erdswick, p.  
xxviii.

This Sir Roger Hillary was one of the judges of the Common Pleas from 1338 to 1354, a very high position at that time. His name is frequently met with in Staffordshire suits of this period. His arms are recorded in a Visitation of Staffordshire made 2 Ed. II. (1308-9), and were "sable, a fleur de lis, Or." They were carved on the ancient pulpit in the church, and were also painted on three of the windows. He died in 30 Ed. III. (1356-57).

Shaw, v. ii, p.  
xii.

His son Roger succeeded to the title and estates. He died in 1 Henry IV. (1399-1400), and of his tomb we have the following description:—"In this church towards the south part resteth a fayre and curious monument, with an alabaster figure of one of the Hillaries, leaning his head on one of his hands as if he were half rising, answerable; his shield on his left arm and upon his body wrought flower de lycees and cross crosslets very exactly." Dean Lyttleton, writing to Dr. Wilkes, says, "I was much pleased with the fine attitude of the old cross-legg'd Hillary in Walshale Church, which I stopped to see." This statue is still in existence, though much mutilated by exposure and rough handling. It is hollow, and seems to be cast of some composition resembling stone. It was removed from the church

(after being for a long time immured, and hidden by boarding, in a niche in the south chancel) in 1821, and was used for ornamenting some rock work in a gentleman's garden. At present it lies in the archway at Rushall Hall. This Sir Roger was the founder of the chantry in 1391. He died without issue, and his estates reverted to his sister Joan, and thus into the family of Mountfort. There are drawings and descriptions of these two monuments in Dugdale's "Visitation," preserved in the Herald's College.

Another tomb bore the following inscription:—

"Orate pro animabus Hugonis Hextale, et  
Isabellæ uxoris ejus qui quidam Hugo obiit . . .

Arms: 1. Quarterly, 1 and 4 Gules, a bend Arg; 2 and 3 Sable, a fleur de leuce Arg."

2. The same, impaling "Sable, a chevron engrailed, between three owls Arg."

Another was inscribed:—

"Orate pro animabus W'mi Hextale, et  
Margaretæ et Johannæ uxoris."

Arms: The same as before, impaling "Party per pale and per chevron."

Another ran thus:—

"Orate pro animabus Ricardi Petett, et  
Margaretæ uxoris ejus, et Joh'nis Petett."

Arms: "A chevron between three bugle horns."

These slabs were to the Hextalls, of Hextall, in the parish of Sleighford, and from the subjoined pedigree it will be seen that they were connected by marriage with the Harpur and Leigh families of Rushall, and the Petits of Little Aston. That the Hexstalls had an interest in the town at that time, is evident from the fact that "a field in Walsal was called Hextall's Meadow, and a house bore his name."

Salt Coll., v. ii  
pp. 106, 107.

Shaw, v. ii, p.  
63.

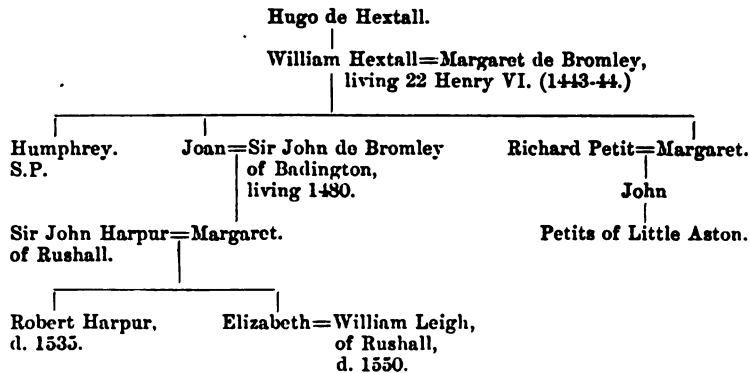
Hugo de Hexstall was lord of the Manor of Millwich, near Sandon, and was living temp. Henry VI. His son William married Margaret, heiress of her brother, John de Bromley, of Blymhill.



## THE CHURCH.

## PEDIGREE OF HEXTALL.

Erdswick, pp.  
46, 97.



Rushall MS.

Salt Coll., v. ii,  
pp. 106, 107.

By an Inquisition of knight's fees, taken at Stafford 10 Henry VI. (1431-32), William Hexstall, of Hexstall, gent., is recorded as holding one-third of Ashley, for the third part of a knight's fee. He was still living in 22 Henry VI. (1443-44). He left a son, Humphrey, who died without issue, and two daughters, Joan, who was married to Sir John de Bromley, of Badington, and Margaret, who was married to Richard Petit. From this Richard Petit descended the Petits of Little Aston Hall.

Joan, daughter of William Hexstall, married Sir John de Bromley, of Badington, by whom she had three daughters, one of whom, Margaret, married Sir John Harpur, of Rushall; they had issue Robert Harpur, of Rushall, and Elizabeth, who (about 1530) married William Leigh, ancestor of the Leighs of Rushall.

Erdswick, p. 96.

The arms of the Hexstall family were:—

"Quarterly, Gules and Sable, a bend between three fleur de lis, Argent in the 2nd and 3rd quarters."

In the windows of the church were the following coats of arms:—

1. Quarterly 1 and 4 chequy Or and B, a chevron Arg.; 2 and 3 Gules, a fess between six cross-crosslets Or. (*Beauchamp*.)

2. *Beauchamp*, impaling Gu. seven mascles Or. (*Ferrers of Groby*.) Thomas de Beauchamp, 12th E. of Warwick, who died in 1401, married Margaret Ferrers, of Groby.

3. Arg. three fleur de liz between six cross-crosslets Sable (*Hillary*) THE CHURCH.  
impaling Gu. fretty Or.

4. *Hillary*, with the bordure Gu.

5. The same, with a label of three points Gu.

6. Sa. a chevron engrailed between three owls A. (*Hextall*).

7. A. a chevron indented Sa. on a chief of the first three martlets  
of the 2nd.

8. Quarterly, Or and Gu. a fleur de liz, Sa. in the first, on a bordure  
Sa. nine bezants.

9. Sable, a fess between three lozenges Arg. (*Aston*.) This was Salt Coll., v. iii,  
Aston of Tixall. pp. 26, 37.

10. Quarterly, 1st, B. a lion passant, over all a chevron Or. The other  
three broken.

On the lower part of the pulpit were two coats of  
arms cut in stone, viz.:

1. *Beauchamp*, impaling *Ferrers*.

2. *Hillary*.

The ancient alabaster font still remains. It is  
octangular in shape, and the stone pedestal is richly  
carved with eight shields. The leaden basin bears  
the date 1712, and the name C. Ward, with the  
initials N.S., S.C., N.B.

The shields were as follows:

1. Stafford and Beauchamp quarterly.

2. A chevron between three owls. (This, says Shaw, is like the arms  
of Prescott, and of Sir C. Burton.) It is probably Hextall?

3. Quarterly, 1 and 4, a chevron, a lion passant guardant, in chief  
three lozenges. "This last is like the arms of Blewit" (Shaw.)

4. Quarterly, ——— and ———, a fleur de liz in the first, all  
within a bordure.

5. . . . a fess engrailed, three martlets.

6. . . . impaling a chevron.

7 and 8, blank.

The church likewise contained tablets to the  
following:

Thomas Nicholls, of Birmingham	...	...	d. 1711.
John Grosvenor, Esq.	...	...	d. 1732.
Judith, wife of Francis Best	...	...	d. 1686-7.
Robert Felton, Vicar	...	...	d. 1769.
Thomas Pashley	...	...	d. 1741.

In the window of St. Catherine's Chapel was a  
painting of St. Catherine with her wheel, part of  
which was still visible in 1795.

In St. Clement's Chapel were several niches, but  
without any figures.

## THE CHURCH.

The church is described by Shaw as having been spacious and lofty, with large galleries east, west, north, and south.

In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1798 are some interesting letters by a local antiquary named Gee, whom Shaw describes as a self-taught genius, and to whose valuable assistance he pays a well-merited tribute. The first of these is devoted to an account of the church at this time; the second gives a short history of the organs, &c. A few quotations from these letters will give a contemporary view of the sacred building a century ago.

"This church stands on a lofty hill consisting of an immense body of sand and gravel, and the entrance into the churchyard from the high-street was (as it is now) by a number of stone steps, but not so steep formerly nor having so many steps as at present, which are 62 in number. Over the highest flight of them there were some ordinary old buildings, which narrowed the passage and obstructed the view of the west front of the church. When arrived at the landing place there were two roads, one to the right and the other to the left, which led in a circuitous way to the north and south porches. There was also an ancient inclosed porch at the west door; but this was not much used as a passage, but served to contain the fire engines, and after they were removed to a building erected for the purpose near the Lich gates. Some poor people sat in this porch on a Sunday, whence they had a full view of the minister, but within these few years there have been many alterations. The old building over the uppermost flight of steps has been taken down, and perhaps this was the only thing done right in the business. The old western porch, instead of being repaired, has been with some trouble also pulled down, and a modern open portico of the Tuscan or Doric order set up in the place. . . . As there is now only one door to this entrance, in bad weather it is obliged to be kept shut, as the wind blows that way full into the nave; and in order to make a new road to this door the churchyard has been fairly cut in two, a passage having been made 24 yards in length and about as deep as a navigable canal (to which it bears some resemblance); and *the dead have been raised up*. Corpses in all degrees of putrefaction were disturbed and laid promiscuously in the passage leading to the north porch, which by that means is much higher than before. The offensive part of this business was done in the night, and these matters were effected at an heavy expense and are no *improvements*. . . . The floor of the east chancel is some steps higher than that of the church, and the ground without, being many feet lower, there is a curious passage under it, just beneath the communion table, through a fine old Gothic arch, for foot passengers. And under this chancel there is also a large vault, now used to hold lumber in. Another, a lesser vault or crypt, opens into this, filled with the sad remains of mortality, skulls and bones. There is a fire-place in the large vault, and a chimney carried up within one of the buttresses to the roof of the chancel," &c.

In the east gallery stood the organ built by Father Smith after the Restoration, to replace an earlier instrument, which is reputed to have been placed in the north gallery and to have been destroyed, and the woodwork, together with the Prayer Books of the church, burnt by the Oliverians, in the Market Place. The following extract serves to throw light upon this assertion :

"Mr. Robert Parker gave £5 per ann. to an Organist, but since the <sup>Fowler's Sur-</sup>organs are demolished it is ordered that £1 13s. 4d. shall be distributed in <sup>vey.</sup> Bread to the poor of the Borough against Christide, and £3 6s. 8d. to the poor of the Foreign."

"The organ had," says Gee, "a very handsome case, though not large, and was adorned with a profusion of carving and gilding. In the centre was a large shield bearing the king's arms, and over the wings were the lion and unicorn, 'sejant and regar-dant,' each of which supported a small shield. On one was painted the bear and ragged staff, and on the other Or, a chevron Gules charged with a Stafford Knot." This organ was repaired in 1726, but becoming the worse for wear, it was sold about 1772 to Mr. George Hill, an inhabitant, for the sum of £12 10s. 0d., and he built a large room in his garden for its reception. He again sold it to the church-wardens of Stow-market, in Suffolk, for £50, in which church it stood for many years, but was eventually again sold to a private individual. It contained several stops not now in use.

Samuel Green, of London, built a new organ in 1773, which cost £400. "It is a pleasant toned <sup>Gee's Letter.</sup> instrument, but seems to want power, and the situation of it may be one cause; for the church walls are within about seven feet of it on each side, and as pews are valuable in this church, two persons each erected one adjoining to it, fronted with mahogany half way up the organ case. These take away the effect of the height of the organ, and perhaps diminish the sound." The organ was opened in Whitsun week, 1773, by Dr. Alcock, of Lichfield, who spoke highly in its

**THE CHURCH.** — favour. In 1844 the instrument was rebuilt and greatly improved by the elder Bishop. In 1880 it was again re-modelled and enlarged by the same firm, and placed in its present position in the chancel. It contains 44 sounding stops, and a total of 2,138 pipes, with patent pneumatic action and other modern appliances. Many of the old stops were retained on account of their age and mellowness of tone.

The organists whose names are recorded are Mr. Ezra Meeson, 1706 (the Parish Book states that in 1711 Richard Meestone was apprenticed to Mary Meestone to serve as organist for the use of his mother during the time of his apprenticeship); Mr. Josiah Herbert, of Coventry, 1738; Mr. John Balam, who was blind, and is said to have been a pupil of the celebrated Stanley; Mr. John Alcock, B.M., 1778, who was notable as the Senior Bachelor of Music in England. He died March 29th, 1791. Mr. William Rudge, who resigned in January, 1796. Mr. Jeremiah Clarke, organist of St. Philip's ('the new church'), Birmingham. Mr. William Rudge again took the post in June, 1798, and was succeeded by Miss Partridge, who resigned the 26th December, 1811. She was followed in 1812 by James Woolman; Dr. Lates, Bachelor of Music; Miss Smith, and Mr. William Eyland. Mr. George Smith was appointed in January, 1842, and resigned in February, 1881. The present organist is Mr. John E. Jeffries, A.C.O.

**Parish Book.** The old tower was built of coarse limestone, and was recased in stone in 1821. The present spire was built in 1777, to replace an older one of unknown date. The Borough paid to the contractor, Mr. John Cheshire, £78 for their share of rebuilding the steeple; but no record is preserved of the share contributed by the Foreign. In taking down the old spire it was found that the foundation or base was insufficient to bear the weight of the proposed new one. In consequence thirteen feet more of spire was taken down than was stated in the original agreement, for which, on December 2nd, 1778, the Borough paid £20, and the Foreign £15.

There are several views of the old church still remaining; two in Shaw's Staffordshire; one of which is also in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1798, and another may be seen on an old Walsall token issued in 1811. In Broughton's copy of Shaw is inserted a drawing of the church, taken from the Paddock, and shewing the old spire, a dwarfed and quaint looking structure. The buildings round the churchyard and Ditch are also well displayed. When or by whom this engraving was made is unknown.

THE CHURCH.

Salt Library.

The chancel had three windows on either side, the vestry two, the transept three, the west front three, while the clerestory showed a long range of small narrow lancets.

Such were some of the main features of the old church, as it existed down to the year 1819. During this and the two succeeding years the fabric was taken down, with the exception of the tower, spire, and chancel, and rebuilt on the old foundation, at a cost of more than £17,000, under the direction of Mr. Goodwin, an architect of London. The old walls were so solid that gunpowder was used to blow them up, and even then considerable difficulty was experienced. The first plinth stone was laid on Monday, January 21st, 1820, the day King George IV. was proclaimed in London.

The following extract from the "Parish Book" shows how the money was obtained, and how expended:

AN ACCOUNT OF MONEY EXPENDED IN THE REBUILDING OF  
WALSALL PARISH CHURCH, TOGETHER WITH AN ACCOUNT  
SHOWING BY WHAT MEANS THE SAME WAS RAISED.

EXPENDITURE.	September 1st, 1824.		
	£	s.	d.
Cash paid to the Contractors ... ..	10,761	10	1
Granted the Contractors an annuity of £500 per an. for nine years. the payment to commence Sept., 1828. without interest ...	4,500	0	0
Extra work. not in Contract ... ..	717	7	0
Cash paid to Architect ... ..	1,080	0	0
Cash paid to Clerk of Works ... ..	227	9	1
	<u>£17,286</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>

## THE CHURCH.

## RECEIPTS.

	£	s.	d.
Borrowed on Church Rates, at 5% ... ..	3,400	0	0
Borrowed from Commissioners for Building New Churches ... ..	2,000	0	0
Granted the Contractors an annuity for £500, from Sept., 1828 .. ..	4,500	0	0
Brief (first payment) ... ..	43	9	2
By Sale of Pews ... ..	1,175	0	0
By Subscriptions ... ..	2,965	2	1
Grant from Church Building Society ... ..	2,000	0	0
By Sale of Lead ... ..	484	17	0
Drawback of Duty on Materials, &c. ... ..	717	18	3
	<hr/>		
	£17,286	6	6
	<hr/>		

Chavasse,  
"Hist. of  
Walsall,"  
p. 18.

Nearly £10,000 of this large sum was levied by rates on the parishioners.

Each purchaser of a pew received an indenture of sale, endorsed "Sale of pews, in what right, and for what use," together with his name, followed by the sentence, "For the use of himself and family, so long as they shall continue inhabitants of the parish of Walsall."

Walsall Note  
Book, p. 240.

In re-building, the lines of the ancient church were adhered to, as far as circumstances would permit. The style of architecture adopted was of different dates. The arches of the west and south doors, and the one dividing the church from the chancel, were of the 13th century, "when the Gothic arch had attained its finest proportion, and before the age of the Tudors had destroyed its elegance by depressing it." The remaining arches and windows were taken from examples of later date, and were not in accord with those already mentioned. The galleries were supported with light iron columns, terminating in fine pointed arches, much too slender and delicate for the proportions of the building.

The organ, as already stated, stood in the eastern gallery entirely blocking up the large chancel arch. Sittings were provided for 2,500 people, of which 1,136 were free.

Memorial Table.

The large window at the west end contains a THE CHURCH. stained glass figure of St. Matthew, towards the cost of which Lord Bradford, Colonel Walhouse, the old Corporation, and John Gough, Esq., contributed.

On the evening of October 10th, 1847, an explosion of gas, which had escaped under one of the pews, occurred in the church by which this window was blown out. One of the beadles, who is said to have accidentally ignited the gas, just after the congregation had left, was killed, and the interior of the building was greatly damaged. An engraving of the church after this accident, from a drawing by Mrs. Sharwood, was published shortly afterwards, and depicts a considerable amount of destruction. From an inscription we learn that "This window injured by an explosion of gas 1847, was restored by Henry Highway, Esq., during his mayoralty, 1852." A large three decker pulpit stood in front of the eastern gallery, and further shut out the view of the chancel. The exterior of the tower, built of coarse limestone, appears at this time to have been entirely recased with stone. The tower contained also a clock, which, in place of four sun dials, was set up about the year Gee's Letter. 1796. The present illuminated clock was added in 1865, and was first set in motion by Mrs. Sharwood, wife of the vicar, on August 7th, at 10 o'clock a.m. It was made by J. Smith and Sons, Clerkenwell, London. It strikes the hour on a bell 24cwt., and the quarters upon four others: is enclosed in a frame of strong iron, 5ft. long and 3ft. wide: the material of which it is made is of the very best gun metal. The escapement is a perfect Graham's dead beat, made on the most exact principle. The pendulum is 9ft. long, of prepared wood, French polished,—to preserve it from the action of damp and weather,—with a heavy spherical ball of over 300lbs. The maintaining power is greatly superior to that generally used for turret clocks, being self-acting. The striking part is constructed on the rack principle, to prevent wrong striking. The hammer, which the clock lifts in



THE CHURCH. striking the large bell, weighs 32lbs. There are inside dials to set all outside hands by, which are so constructed that all the hands move simultaneously. Patent wire line is used to support the weights instead of the ordinary rope line. The illuminated dial is 8ft. in diameter, glazed with opal glass,—the centre of the dial being the largest sheet ever made. Besides having the time on three dials outside, there is another one placed in the bell-ringers' room, 20in. in diameter, to show the time for their convenience. The chimes for the quarters are known as the Cambridge or Westminster, and are played upon four bells, viz., 1, 2, 3, 6 of the peal. The funds were raised by the exertions of the late Mr. D. S. Moore, surgeon.

In 1873 the aisles and transepts were reseated, and the font removed from behind the pulpit to its present place in the north transept, at a cost of about £300. A like amount was expended in the following year in reroofing the whole of the north and south aisles, and in 1877 very necessary repairs were made to the tower and spire, at a cost of nearly £200.

In 1879 extensive alterations and improvements were effected chiefly through the exertions of the Rev. William Allen. The chancel arch was taken down and rebuilt, the organ gallery removed, and the instrument enlarged, reconstructed, and placed in its present position, thus throwing nave and chancel into one. The old three decker pulpit, the pews and the gallery over the south transept were swept away, and the church made entirely free. These alterations gave rise to several interesting and important discoveries. The tracery of one of the original windows, in perfect condition, was found hidden between the organ and vestry wall. This was carefully preserved, and from it the new chancel windows, replacing old ones of a square shape, were carefully copied. This early window belongs probably to the date 1400, when the church was rebuilt. The old chancel arch was hollow in its construction, and only had one face to the west. This was removed and a solid stone arch

introduced in its place. The old whitewashed roof of THE CHURCH. the chancel was removed, and a new oak roof substituted, whilst the walls were divested of thick coatings of plaster. Beneath the end window on the south side were found the remains of a sedilia, which has been restored at the expense of Miss Brace. Between the windows were large stones, evidently the remains of figures of the Saints, which bear still the marks of having been richly carved. The plain rubble walls, parts of which were intentionally left, indicate that the stalls were at one time canopied. On the north side two doorways were found, originally means of communication with the churchyard and the crypt underneath the chancel. On the south side a flight of steps led through the thickness of the wall into the churchyard. The chancel has a very perceptible inclination to the north, which is best seen from the altar steps. The alterations were executed by Mr. Williams, of London, from the designs of Mr. Ewan Christian, the well-known ecclesiastical architect.

The stained east window was erected as a memorial to Sister Dora, and was the work of Messrs. Burlison and Grylls, of London, at a cost of £300. The lower part consists of five lights, each containing two subjects. In the upper part of the central one is the Crucifixion, and right and left of it are the Virgin Mary and St. John. The other seven subjects are the seven Acts of Mercy. The upper tracery is filled with sacred symbols, and representations of the four Archangels and the twelve Apostles bearing a scroll, on which is inscribed the Apostles' Creed and the Agnus Dei. Under the window is the inscription, "This window was erected to the glory of God, in loving memory of Sister Dora, who entered into rest Christmas Eve, 1878, by numerous friends."

The church was re-opened on September 21st, 1880. In addition to several old tablets already described, the church contains many monuments

**THE CHURCH.** — and slabs erected during the present generation, and calling for no detailed notice. Some of the old tables of benefactions painted in 1654, may still be seen in out of the way spots in the church.

The earliest mention of the church bells is in the "Inventory of Church Goods," 6 Ed. VI. (1552-3), where are enumerated "one sacrynge bell, a sanctus bell, and iiij other bells." The account further states "that the v<sup>th</sup> bell was broken syns the makynge of the fyrste Inventorye, and by the hole consent of this parishe the same was solde to the amendement of divers brydges and hygh ways aboute ther towne, whyche were very noysome to the kynge's people passinge that way." Of these, "iiij bells in the steepul and a sanctus bell" were left during the king's pleasure in custody of the churchwardens.

The next fact we possess carries us down to the year 1721, when the Churchwardens' Accounts state that "the great bell was re-cast" by Joseph Smith, of Edgbaston.

**Parish Book.**

In 1775 the bells, being 'very ruinous and much decay'd,' were re-cast by Thomas Rudhall, of Gloucester, "the expense whereof the inhabitants of the Borough of Walsall to be at two-thirds charge, and the inhabitants of the Foreign one-third charge thereof." The total expense was £196 0s. 4½d. The old peal weighed 54 cwt. 0 qrs. 11 lbs.; the new peal, consisting of eight bells, weighs 90 cwt. 2 qrs. 27 lbs., and is in the key of E flat.

In 1823 the bells were re-hung, and from this time to 1863 received no further attention. At this time their defective condition gave rise to apprehension, and a public fund was raised, by means of which they were thoroughly restored by the firm of John Taylor and Co., of Loughborough. Two new treble bells were added, the total cost being about £250. The work was superintended, and the amount raised, by the exertions of Mr. D. S. Moore, late of Walsall, who took an active interest in the subject.

The bells bear the following inscriptions and THE CHURCH.  
dates:

1st or Treble. "Rev. John Hodges Sharwood, Vicar; William Eagles, George Gilbert, Jr., Churchwardens; Jno. Taylor and Co., Bell Founders, Loughborough."

2nd. "This peal was augmented to ten bells by the addition of two. Voluntary subscriptions raised through the kind exertions of David Smith Moore, Surgeon of this town, A.D. 1863. J. T. and Co."

3rd. The original Treble. "When us you ring, we'll sweetly sing."  
Thomas Rudhall, 1775, Gloucester.

4th.—"Fear God, honour the king."

5th. } "Prosperity to this parish." J. R., 1775.  
6th. }

7th. "Thomas Rudhall, Gloucester Foundry, 1775."

8th. "George Mears, London, Fecit., 1809."

9th. "Thomas Hector, Edward Lycett, Thomas Oerton, Deykin Hemming, Churchwardens, 1775."

10th or Tenor. "I to the church the living call,  
And to the grave do summon all."

The Tenor weighs 23 cwt. 1 qr. 16 lbs.

The interior of the belfry is hung with tables recording the notable peals which have been rung from it, and of which the following is a specimen:—  
"On February 4th, 1861, a true peal of Grandsire Majors, containing 10,032 changes, was rung in a most excellent style, in 6 hours and 18 minutes, this being the greatest number of changes ever rung on 8 bells in this method."

The noble proportions of the spire are well seen from the platform which supports the bells, whilst the panoramic view from the parapet of the tower may be described, without exaggeration, as being, in fine weather, one of the most extensive and striking in the county.

The remaining features of the church may be briefly indicated. The interior has been enriched by valuable gifts from various members of its congregation. The carved oak pulpit, given by Mr. Samuel Russell; the reading desk by Mr. Alfred Thacker; the lectern by Mr. Samuel Harvey, and its accompanying

THE CHURCH. stand by Mr. Benjamin Love. Mrs. Allen and others also gave valuable contributions. At Christmas 1883, two handsome gas pendants were placed in the chancel; and at Easter 1884, new gas standards replaced the old ones throughout the church. These improvements were effected by private subscription. In addition to those previously described, the walls have several modern monuments, brasses, and memorial tablets, two of which are to the memory of Bishops Lonsdale and Selwyn. The finely moulded roof is also well worth the attention of the visitor.

The present communion plate has been melted down and re-moulded. It bears the name of Humphrey Persehouse, of Reynold's Hall, by whose executors it was given to the church in the year 1697.

On the exterior of the building may be noted several old carvings, and over the chancel, mutilated fragments of the curious gargoyles which once ornamented the original church.

Pausing underneath the massive Gothic archway which supports the chancel we may pass through a low doorway, into a chamber which serves as an entrance to the crypt, though evidently built at a later date. The crypt itself has a fine vaulted roof, strengthened with ponderous groinings of stone. To the west, a winding passage led upwards to the ancient church; to the east are two small lancet windows, whilst additional openings have been made, at some subsequent period, through the thick of the walls. The remains of an ancient 'ambre,' or small receptacle used for holding the vestments, chalices, &c., used during Mass, are still to be distinctly traced. Mr. James Davis, of Walsall, who has examined the crypt with me, suggests that it was a bed room and sacristy combined, and that the large wagon vaulted chamber was a chapel and sitting room. Lodgings for 'Morrow Mass Priests' were formerly attached to Parish Churches, and specimens still survive at Solihull, Kettering, Warmington, and other places. The crypt is undoubtedly the earliest part of the

building, and the nucleus upon which the mediæval church was constructed. THE CHURCH.

The limits of the churchyard can still be easily traced. To the south it was bounded by the old Grammar School and a number of dilapidated houses which were removed in 1854. A public footpath, which in modern times has been raised several feet, ran across the eastern border, beneath the chancel arch and thence into the Ditch. At the rebuilding in 1819 the churchyard, which had several roads through it from time immemorial, was locked up from the public until 1827. In July of this year Mr. Joseph Cotterell, who was then constable, "broke open the locks of the iron gates with a chisel and hammer, to the convenience of the public." In 1750, the churchyard being full and quite inadequate for the requirements of the town, it was disused, and the burial ground in Bath Street was constructed.

MS. Notes to  
Pearce.

## HISTORY OF THE CORPORATION.

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The origin of our modern forms of local government is to be sought in the hundred moot and the tun moot of our Saxon forefathers, when the small boroughs throughout the country were gradually becoming the centres of social and industrial life, and when the people gathered in churchyard and market, on mound or hustings, for the election of their borough grieve and for the consideration of the general interests of the community. The arrival of the Normans was accompanied by a complete change in the existing constitution of the country. The king laid claim to the land, reserving to himself the larger cities and boroughs, and distributing the remainder among his followers as tenants in chief. In place of the borough grieve the king conferred the appointment upon one of his own countrymen, who received the title of bailiff, and who in the larger towns generally assumed the Norman appellation of Mayor. Large sums were extorted by the king for these appointments, and the people were consequently severely oppressed by the bailiffs, who exercised uncontrolled powers of exaction. Thus it happened that the burgesses of towns actually paid large sums to the Crown for the liberty of choosing their own ruler, and from this arose the custom of annual fee farm rents. In these cases the old form of free government was adopted, and the old name of borough grieve revived. This officer was held

Hist. of Tam-  
worth, p. 55.

responsible for the rents, tallages, and aids which which were from time to time demanded, and if arrears did occur the townsmen were sued collectively by the officers of the Crown itself. The formation during the 16th century of distinct corporate bodies deprived the burgesses generally of the powers of self legislation.

THE  
CORPORATION.

Another important element in early municipal history was the formation of frith guilds, or trading companies, through membership of which admission was obtained to the franchise, which seems to have been vested in all the resident and trading inhabitants who contributed to the local taxes and other local duties. The early Norman Kings recognized the privileges of various towns by granting them charters, conferring exemption from toll with other customs and rights.

Green,  
"Conquest of  
England."

These few remarks are rendered necessary from the fact that Walsall was anciently a borough by prescription or immemorial usage, "whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary." As the time of legal memory is still declared to be co-eval with the reign of Richard I., or 1189, it follows that the prototype of the present government of the town, together with many customs and privileges, which it has enjoyed, must have been granted by various kings previously to that date.

Walsall Note  
Book, p. 81.

The earliest record we possess relating to the burgesses, is in a grant by William Ruffus, then lord of the manor. In this document, which is undated, but which may fairly be referred to about the year 1197 (antea 54), at which time we first find him in possession of the estate, he grants "to the Burgesses of Walessale, freedom from service, customs, and secular demands, except when the king tallies his burgesses, of common of pasture in all his lands and forinsic (foreign) woods save in his park, and his other defences and pannage at acorn time, that is to say, for every pig over one year one penny, and for a pig of less age one halfpenny; reserving

Calendar of  
Deeds, I.



THE  
CORPORATION.

Calendar of  
Deeds, 9.

right to approve himself of all his tenements without hindrance, with various other reservations relating to the sale of burgages and the penalties relating to the breaking of the assize of beer, &c. For these privileges he acknowledges the payment from the said burgesses of twelve marks of silver. Rent 12<sup>l</sup> for each burgage." The freedom here given was not completed for more than a century afterwards, when Sir Roger de Morteyn and Sir Thomas Ruffus granted in 2 Ed. II. (1308-9), to the burgesses "freedom from all demands of tallage and pannage, and from breach of assize of beer made between Christmas and the Purification, and at all times of fairs in Walesdale according to ancient custom with other liberties."

In these two important deeds we have a direct insight into the government of the borough at that time. In the former it states that "if any one of the said burgesses shall desire to sell his burgage he shall make it known to us or to our bailiff." By itself this statement is of little value, but taken in connection with the following sentences in the second document, its significance becomes more marked. "Nor shall any of the aforesaid burgesses nor their heirs for any transgression done in the town of Walesdale be impleaded elsewhere except in the said town before the bailiffs of the burgh; nor shall any distrainment pass upon them except by the bailiffs of the said burgh, and if it should happen that the 'averia' (cattle) of the aforesaid burgesses should be held for trespass made upon our corn or herbage, the loss inflicted by that trespass shall be viewed by two law worthy men of the town of Walesdale, and by two other law worthy men of the forinsic (foreign) tenants, and the fine for the damage shall be adjudged by them." The deed further states that "if anyone takes burgage anew in the said town after the completion of these presents, he shall not enjoy the said liberties until he has satisfied 'the commonalty of the town,' and agreed with them in

regard to these liberties." Robert le Baillife is mentioned in 1353, and again in 1367.

It appears, therefore, fair to assume that up to this time, 1309, the internal affairs of the town were regulated by bailiffs, with perhaps other subordinate officers elected annually by the burgesses, or, as in the case of Tamworth, by selected or capital burgesses. It is also to be inferred that the town, up to this time, was small and unimportant, for in 1283 the annual rent of the burgesses was worth no more than 40s., the toll of the market 3s., and the pleas and payments of the court 10s. Again in 1315 the Sheriff of Staffordshire, being required to state how many boroughs there were within the limits of his jurisdiction, returned only Stafford.

THE  
CORPORATION.

Cal. of Deeds,  
19, 23.

Inq. Post Mor-  
tem.

Merewether,  
"Hist. of  
Boroughs."

In May, 1886, a document of the greatest importance, as illustrating the early municipal history of the town, was discovered by Mr. Gillespie to be in the possession of the Rev. Walter Sneyd, of Keele Hall, Staffordshire. It had been catalogued by the Royal Historical MSS. Commission, in the Appendix to their Report No. 3, a copy of which is contained in the Birmingham Law Library. The document is thus described: "A long roll of vellum (about 30 feet), containing lists of the Burgesses of Walsall, Co. Stafford, temp. Ed. III., R. II., H. IV., H. VI., and H. VII., and computi of the Mayor, the names of the burgesses and their payments on admission. The computi come down to 1619. On it is the Indenture made by Sir Humphrey Stanley, Knight, High Steward of the town of Walsall, and the Mayor and 25 Burgesses. Then follow the Ordinances. In another hand is the ratification by Sir Thomas Lovell, knight, and apparently his autograph signature."

Mr. Gillespie, after devoting a great deal of time and patience to the deciphering of the deed, which in many places was faded and almost illegible, found out that it contained not merely lists of the burgesses, but that it was, in fact, the original Burgess Roll or Burgess Book of the Borough of Walsall,

THE  
CORPORATION.  
1377.

extending from the time of Edward III. to the time of James I.

I cannot do better than quote Mr. Gillespie's further description of this venerable document: "The so-called Indenture indorsed upon the Roll is not an Indenture but an Ordinance made by Sir Humphrey Stanley, High Steward of the town and the Mayor, and Capital Burgesses for the good government of the town; and was the Prototype of the Bye-Laws, which in these days are made by the Town Council. Underneath the Ordinance is an allowance thereof by Sir Thomas Lovell, K.G., a friend of Henry VII. and Chamberlain to King Henry VIII." When the local value of the Roll became apparent to Mr. Sneyd, he most generously presented it to the Mayor and Corporation, "to be deposited with their other Archives in the Town Chest," whence, as Mr. Sneyd said, it had evidently strayed. From a Warrant afterwards to be quoted, it seems likely that the document had been obtained from the town authorities at the time of the Civil War, and had for some unknown reason failed to be returned.

The first entry on the Roll bears the date 1377, and runs as follows:

"An Assembly (Consilium) of the Burgesses of the Town of Walsall, held there on Monday next after the Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the 51st year of the reign of King Edward III. after the conquest (1377)."

Then follow a number of entries relating to the admission of burgesses, of which the subjoined are examples:

"Walter Fletcher came amongst the said Burgesses and gave them 2s. 4d., that he might enjoy the freedom of the Burgesses of the Town aforesaid, as in a certain Charter by the Lords of the Manor of Walsall, to them thereof granted is more fully contained. And he did fealty to the Burgesses," &c.

"Roger Mollesley was received as a Burgess, and gave 2s. for a fine, and did," &c.

"Henry Mylleward de Ruschale was received as a Burgess, and gave for a fine 6s. 8d., because he was not of the Manor nor Tenant within the Manor."

"Richard Bridgend, of Rushall Street, was received as a Burgess to this extent, that he might enjoy, &c., and he gave 6s. 8d. for a fine, and did fealty to the Burgesses," &c. THE CORPORATION.  
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"Henry Marchall of Walsall was received as a Burgess, and paid forthwith 6s. 8d., and did fealty to the Burgesses."

"Richard Wever, heir to the aforesaid Henry, was received a Burgess by descent from the aforesaid Henry Marchall."

Mr. W. H. Stevenson, of Nottingham, gives some ingenious speculations regarding the above entries. With regard to Fletcher and Bridgend, he thinks that they were Foreign Burgesses, and he remarks, "At Ipswich it was usual to admit as Foreign Burgesses, noblemen and others owning land in the Borough. These Foreign Burgesses enjoyed the immunity from paying tolls possessed by the full burgesses, and in return they paid scot and lot. In 1273, it was provided that Foreign Burgesses should only be made for the term of their lives, and in return they were to make certain gifts towards the fee farm of the town," &c.

A Walsall Burgess at this time was exempt from tallage, while he enjoyed common of pasture, pannage, and various other privileges. Cal. of Deeds, 9.

With regard to the entry about Richard Wever, Mr. Stevenson explains it as probably meaning that Wever was the son of Marchall's daughter. "In very many (if not all) Boroughs, the husband of a burgess's daughter enjoyed the privilege of being a burgess without being one in his own right. If Wever's father died before his mother (in whom the burgess-ship was inherent), he might well be described as a burgess 'by descent' from his maternal grandfather."

On the Roll, after numerous similar entries, most of them still old Walsall names, comes the following Ordinance:—

"It is ordained by the assent of all the Burgesses, that if anyone henceforth presume to receive any Burgess, without the presence of the Mayor, Constables, Bailiffs, and twelve other Burgesses, he shall pay to the Commonalty of the Borough 40s. And if anyone shall be convicted of revealing the counsel of the Borough, he shall pay 40s."

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Then follow entries of admission of the following persons:—"John Pencrich, Robert Pakenton, John at Bowdeocke. The total £10 0s. 8d."

Thus ends this early Concilium. Another was held in 22 Richard II. (1393), and again in 3 Henry IV. Afterwards they became more frequent, and the heading changes from "Assembly of the Burgesses" to "The Accounting of the Mayor." The length of time which elapsed between these "Concilia" has been made the subject of much conjecture. Mr. Stevenson thinks that perhaps "A Concilium solemnly assembled every twenty years, and ratified the formal proceedings of the previous years, so that the Concilium was a sort of registration office. Or again, that they refer to a general meeting of the burgesses, summoned upon an important occasion, rather than to a session of a council."

In the above Ordinance we also find clearly outlined the municipal features of our present Town Council. The Mayor is now first mentioned, although his office must have been in existence for some time previously. When or under what circumstances that office, with its consequent surroundings, was first established, we have no evidence to show, but there is a weighty difference between the language used in the Charter of 1308 and the well-defined statement of the Mayor, Constables, Bailiffs, and Burgesses of the first Ordinance of 1377.

Walshale  
Chartulary.

A record dated 19 Rich. II. (1395-6), gives a further insight into the civil affairs of the town at this period. It has been before referred to as concerning the "Grinding of Corne by the Inhabitants of Walshale," &c. (p. 78.) This document states that the lord's squyeres "sent for all the burgesses of the sayd burght of Walshale to come before them" and they take the "othes of XII men of the sayd tenantes and burges," &c.

For over forty years we have little further information to illumine the mediæval darkness which settles over the town and its history, but in the Town

Chest there is still preserved a document which throws a flood of new light upon the subject, and sketches in curious phraseology the outline of the present corporation. This record is written in English, but is undated, and refers probably to the early years of the reign of Henry VI. The first fourteen sections relate to the constitution, duties, and obligations of the "Maior and his XXIV brethern;" the remaining sections have reference to the "Ordynances for the Church," and have been already alluded to. The following transcription has, with the help of Mr. Gillespie, been carefully collated with the original:

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## CODE OF LAWS.

I.—First, we ordeyne and stablysshe all thies articles hereafter Cal. of Deeds, 46. folowyng, to the seid belongyng, that is to say, after eny chosyng of eny Masters of the Gylde, that these articles shalbe rehersed in the counsell chamber before them which be so chosen for the tyme beyng to thentent that they shall not fayle to kepe and folowe the good rule and governaunce which be conteyned in the seyd ordinaunce, for the welth and profit of the sayde Gylde and in eschuyng of suche grete mysorder and inconvenyence as here of late hath fortunyd and happenyd. And also in lykewise at eny Michelmas Court when the Mayer, Bayly, Constable, and Sergeaunts be chosen, alle the articles wich concern the good rule and governaunce of the Borough, to be rehersed by the olde Mayer and his brethern, before and to the newe Mayer, Bayly, Constable and Sergeaunts, for the good contynueaunce of gode rule and governaunce of the Borough, to be had and used all the yere after, and

II.—Also it is ordeyned and stablished, that the Mayer, Masters of the Gylde, (?) Constables and Sergeaunts shalbe openly sworn upon a prymer or the holy Evangelists, to observe, fulfil, and kepe these articles folowyng; and in as moche as in them lyethe, to cause alle other of the Borough to kepe and observe the same articles.

III.—Also it is ordeyned, that the Mayer and the Officers above named, and also that the Mayer and Mayers, and Officers, that hereaft. shalbe, shall cause a comen semble to be had, and shall call before them alle the Burgesses of the Towne and Borough then and there, every Burges to be sworn to obey the Mayer and Officers for the tyme beyng, and that hereafter shalbe, and for his parte, kepe the Statuts of the same Towne and Borough; and also shall geve his assistaunce to cause other to do in lyke man<sup>r</sup> of wise, and in alle man<sup>r</sup> causes concernyng the kinge's pease, honeste welth and profit of the Church and Boroughe, shall geve good and indifferent counsell, and shalbe no part taker in eny cause ayenst the welth of the same Towne, but wele and truly, egally and indifferently to do, move hym-self to be redy at alle tymes to his power, to assiste

THE CORPORATION. the Maier, and alle other officers of the same Towne for the tyme beyng, for the maynteynance and pruvacion (preservation) of good rule, welth, and profytt of the same Towne and Church.

IV.—Also it is ordeyned, that if eny of the said Burgesses refuse the ordenaunce of the article next above wrytten, that then he or they so refusing to forfett to the Burges Box, for his obstynacy, viz. viiid. and if he do offend eft-sons, (again) then he so offending immediatly be discharged of his or theyer Burgessye or Burgesship and office if he bere eny. And every Burgess so offending shall forfet to the Burges-Box for his obstynacy, viz. viiid. in the same maner to be levyed by the Bayly of the Boroughe, and he to have thereof for his office-doyng (doing) at every tyme iiid. (4d.), and the same persone nev<sup>r</sup> aft. to be Burges; but if he geve at his entre next to the Burges-Box xs. and then to be sworne in man<sup>r</sup> and forme as is above-said.

V.—Also it is ordeyned and stablyshed, that if eny of the number of the XXIIII brethern, that now be, or eny other that hereafter shalbe chosen to be of the company of the XXIIII of the said Towne of Walsall, that uppon sufficient warnyng do not appere when they or eny of them be required by the Mayer or Mayers for the tyme beyng, at any day or hower assigned for the comon welth of the Towne, and also com not to the Gild Halle by the third knollyng of the comon bell with oute a resonable excuse, pred that then every one so offending to lose xiid. for evy tyme, as oft as they be founden defectyf, and it to be levyed by the Bayly of the Borogh, at the comaundement of the Mayer or Mayers for the tyme beyng, and that to put in to the Burges-Box, and the Bayly to have iiid. for doying his office.

VI.—Also it is ordeyned, that if eny of the XXIIII that now be or hereaft shalbe, utter, shewe or disclose eny counceill moved, had or spoken prively amongst them, for the comon welthe of the said Towne, if sufficient profe theruppon be had, he to forfet to the Burges-Box iiis. iiid. and that to be levyed by the Bayly, and he to have iiid. for the leveying of the same. And he that so offendithe to be put oute of the felishipp of the XXIIII, and Counsell of the Towne, and nev<sup>r</sup> aft. to be called as one of theym, but upon a newe fyne to be sessed by the Mayer and brethern.

VII.—Also it is ordeyned, that if eny variaunce, debate, or discorde, be had by eny parson or psones of the seid company of the XXIIII, or betwene eny other of the said Towne of Walsall, that then they to abide the ordnaunce, dome, and jugement of the said counsell and brethern, that have no interest in the said mater of variaunce. And if they will not abyde the sayde ordnaunce as is before rehersed, evy one of them, or he beyng in defeaute, to forfet viz. viiid. to the Burges-Box, to be levyed by the Bayly of the Boroughe, and he to have iiid. for doying his office.

VIII.—Also it is ordeyned and stablyshed, that if eny man<sup>r</sup>, manis son, servnte, or pntyse (apprentice) within the Towne, dwellyng be founden at eny alehouse, or at eny prevey place, playng at eny unlawfull games, except in Cristemas, as dyce, tables, cardes, cloch, tenes, foteball, or eny other lyke contrurye to the statute of this lande and ordnaunce of the same towne, then they that so be founden in defeaute, to be taken and put in pryson, and to make his fyne to the Box aftur his offence, for his

defaute-makyng, that to be leyved by the Bayly, and he to of them for his office-doyng, *iiiid. provyded alwey that eny of the XXIIII, or an honest man in their company, may play at tables for an ob ale* but not custumably. THE CORPORATION.  
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IX.—Also it is ordeyned, that who soevyr suffer eny dise-player, carder, tenys player, or other unliefull gamer, to use unlifull games in their house, to lese for evy suche defeaute *vis. viiid.* accordyng to the Statute of this lande.

X.—Also it is ordeyned, that if eny mans son, servaunte, or prentyse, or eny other comon sytter up, be taken in the strete, or at alehouse aft. ix of the clok, from the fest of Saynt Michell tharchangell, unto the fest of thanunciacon of our Lady; and aft. x of the clock from the fest of thanunciacon of oure Lady unto the fest of Saynt Michell, withoute a lefull excuse, they to be had to pson; and the Bayly to have for his office doying of evy one so taken, and able and sufficyent to pay *iid.* and *iid.* to the Burges-Box. And if the party be insufficient, then to remayn in pson duryng the Mayers plesr and his brethern.

XI.—Also it is ordeyned, that if eny man kepe eny at the ale or sportyng in their houses, aft. the howers appoynted, to make a fyne, therfore, and to be sessed by the Maier. And if by ons or twyes warnyng, do not amend, then the same ale house to be put downe by the comaundment of the Mayer and his brethern, or to fynd sufficient suerte to kepe better rule in ther seid howes.

XII.—Also yt is ordeyned, that if eny parson or parsones misorder them in worde or dede, ayenst (against) the Stuarde, Understuard, Mayer, Bayly, or other Officers, or ayenst any of the XXIIII, that then he that so offendith and mysorderith hymself, and brekyth this ordenaunce, shall obey the correccions of the Mayer and officers for the tyme beyng, and the XXIIII, or ells to avoyd the Towne within xii dayes warnyng after suche offence, or default done and proved, uppon payne of *xxs.* and that to be leyved by the Bayly to the use of the Burges-Box, taking *iiiid.* for his office.

XIII.—Also it is ordeyned, that the Mayer of the Borough of *Walsall* for the tyme beyng, shall make and receyve Burgesses in his yere, accordyng to the olde custume: but evy man so admytted shalbe sworn in lyke maner as is ordeyned in the *iiiid* article of this Roll. And uppon Seynt Clements-day, the said Mayer shall accompt before the newe Mayer and v or vi of his bredern, by hym to be appoynted, and before suche other of the brethern as wilbe there, as well of alle suche Burgesses as the seyde olde Meyer hathe made and receyved in his yere as of alle othyr causes concernyng his seid office. And the olde Mayer at the said accompte, to paye his money for the seid Burgesses, and alle other dueties to the newe Maier, and then the same Burgesses to be registred and set in the newe Burgess Rolle for evr. And the said money to be put in to the Burgess Box, and the same Box to remayne and be put in the Tresure Cofer tyll the next accompt.

XIV.—Also it is ordeyned, that evy Burgess shall paye the one half of his fyne at his admyttaunce, and the other half when the Mayer goeth oute of his office: but if eny Burges be unpaid his money, or eny pt. therof, when the olde Mayer comyth to his accompts and will not pay it then, that then they to be clerely discharged of their admyttaunce, and nev<sup>r</sup> aft. to be receyved: but if he or they paye *xs.* for the fyne of the newe admyttaunce.



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# ORDYNAUNCS FOR THE CHURCHE.

XV.—Also it is ordeyned, stablyshed, and agreed, that the Masters of Saynt John's Gild, the Mayer and Wardens, shall not make gift or graunte of eny donacion of eny Chauntrey, nor lese or lettyng of eny lyvelode belongyng to the said Gildes, withoute the assent of the XXIIII, or the more parte of the best and sadest (oldest) of them. And also that none of the XXIIII, nor none within the Towne or pisse dwellyng, shall make eny labour or sute to eny of the patrons for eny donacon (donation) of any of the said Chauntrees withoute the assent and consent of the Masters of the Gilde, and the more parte of the XXIIII.

XVI.—Also it is ordeyned, that when eny of the said Chauntres of eny of bothe Gilds fallen voide, that then the Masters of the Gild or Wardens shall upon payne of forfeiture of vis. viiid. immediatly make instance seute and labour to the Patrons of the said servyse so fallyng voide, that the seid Patrons wolle in the honour of God, or Lady, and Saynt John Baptist, to be so good Masters to the Towne of *Walsall*, as to admytte such Pste or Pstes as be able in conyng of pryksonge, to maynten, kepe, and uphold the queer (choir), whereby Goddes svice (service) shalbe the bettr mayntened and kept, and also that they may be honest and weldisposed, and of good convsacion in bodely lyvyng (living), and also that they be neither disars ne cardars (cardplayers).

XVII.—Also yt is ordeyned, that yerely when eny Masters of the Gilde shalbe chosen aft. the Gild fest, accordyng to the olde custume, that then the olde Masters of the Gilde shall by byll indented triptite (of three parts) immediatly aft. the said elecion, delyvr to the newe Masters alle the money, plate, juells, and evydences, and alle other stuff that belongeth to their kepyng, and to the said Gilde so that it may be knowen with what thyngs the new Masters shalbe charged with at their incomyng, and at their accompte makyng, and the one byll to remayne with the newe Masters and other with the old Masters, and the III de in Saynt Johns Coffre.

XVIII.—Also it is ordeyned, that the Churchewardens, bothe of the body of the Church, of oure Ladye, Seynt Clement, Seynt Kateryn, and Seynt Nicholas, with alle other members, shall com to their accomptes, uppon Seynt Kateryn's-day, before the Mayer and v or vi of his brethern by the seyde Mayer to be appoynted, and before suche other of his brethern as wilbe there; and if they or eny of them be not at the said Day, redy to make their accompts, then they that so be in defaute, to forfeit vis. viiid. to be levyed as is before said, and to be put to the Burges-Box.

XIX.—Also it is ordeyned, that the Mayer for the tyme beyng, shall truely call uppon the old Mayer, with alle the Wardens above rehersed, and other Officers under them to make their accompts before him at the dayes above wrytten. And also he shall geve warnyng to v or vi of his seid brethern, with other as it is aforesaid to be there at the seid accompts; and if he be neligent therin, and do not accordyng to this ordonaunce, he to forfeit and paye to the Burges-Box xs., and if the olde Mayer be not redy with his accompts at the seid daye, then he to forfeit and paye vis. viiid. to the Burges-Box. And if eny defaute be in eny of the brethern that shalbe warned by the Mayer to be there at eny of the accompts; then

evy of them proved in defeaute, whithe out resonable excuse, shall forfyte  
his. and it to be levyed as is abovesaid.

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XX.—Also it is ordeyned for the more suertye and sauward of the  
tresure of the said Gilde, that therbe iiij keyes of the tresour coffer be-  
longyng to Seynt John, and that the Masters of the Gilde shall have one  
of the grete keyes in keyyng, the Meyer the other, and the Bayley shall have  
the keyyng of one of the lytell keyes, and in his absence, the Constable  
and one of the sadest and weldisposed Prest of Seynt John's Gild, that  
shalbe assigned by the Maier and Masters of the Gilde, for the tyme beyng,  
to have the keyyng of the other small key, so that nother one of thies psones,  
ne no other shall open the said Coffer, with out the consent and assent  
of alle the other. And also it is ordeyned, that the said iiij psones that  
be lymtyed to the keyyng of the iiij keyes, shall not open the same Cofer  
without the psons of iiij or v, or mo of the most honest brethern of the  
said Gild, beyng of the XXIIII: and if this rule be broken, or if eny of  
Saynt John's godes (goods) be imbeselled or stolne in their defeaute,  
that then they to make restitution, and it to be laid unto there charge;  
and if they breke this ordenaunce, to forfett x mrck (8l. 13s. 4d.) to Saynt  
Johns Boxe. And that alle these keyes be brought forthe at alle tymes  
when it shalbe thought necessary by the Masters of the Gild and the Meier.

XXI.—Also it is ordeyned and condescended by the aggrement  
of my Lord Barnes, Sir Robt. Sheffield Knyght, Richard Litelton, and  
Roulond Hethe, of *Bloswiche*, Patrons of iiij Chauntres, belongyng to oure  
Ladye's Gylde, that for the more suertye and safgard of the tresour and  
evydence of that Gilde, that ther be iii keyes of the Coffer, where the tresure  
is, and the Masters of Saynt John's Gilde to have the keyyng of the one key,  
and the Wardens of oure Ladyis Gild to have the keyyng of the iid. key, and  
one of the saddest psts of the same Gild to have the keyyng of the thirde  
keye; and this ordenaunce to be kept in payne of x mrc, as it is  
rehered before in the ordenaunce of the Gild of Saynt John Baptist.

In this Code of Laws we have evidently an  
expansion of the Ordinance of 1377, and from the  
expression, "the new Burgess Roll," it would seem  
to have been formulated shortly after that Roll was  
commenced. From it we gather that the Mayor and  
Council possessed unlimited powers of legislating for  
the town and its inhabitants, while reserving certain  
privileges for themselves, as evidenced by Clauses  
VIII. and XII., which latter will be better appreciated  
when compared with the document referred to in  
16 Henry VIII., which states that the people of the P. 90.  
town were "evyl and mysordered persons, suddenly  
gyven to affrays and insurrections (as was well  
known)."

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In Section 12, we have especial mention of the Steward and Understeward, and from their taking precedence of the Mayor and the Council infer that they were treated with uncommon dignity and importance, a fact perhaps explained by ancient custom and the power (still great) of the manorial owners of that time. At a later date we shall find the High Steward more definitely mentioned, and authoritatively sanctioning further ordinances, giving additional powers and regulations to the Mayor and his Council.

From Section 3, we learn that the Burgesses were to give aid and assistance to the Mayor and his officers, and act, in fact, as a sort of Common Council subordinate to the Corporation. Moreover each Mayor possessed the privilege during his year of office of creating any number of such burgesses, for whom burgages or houses could be found, and who possessed probably voting powers on various general questions, the exact nature of which has, however, still to be discovered. That they enjoyed also certain particular privileges has already been pointed out.

One last important fact we gather from this ancient Code, is that any connection which may at an earlier time have subsisted between the ruling powers of the town and the two Guilds attached to the church, was now practically severed. The Mayor, however, still retained a large share of authority in all matters relating to the Church and Guilds, while no gift of any chantry or lease of any Guild land could be made without the assent of the XXIV. It is also clear that the Council itself was largely composed of the brethren of the Guilds.

Walsall Note  
Book, p. 127.

About the year 1830, on taking down some wainscot in the old Town Hall, an antique box, cut out of solid wood, was discovered. The workmanship of the box and the lock were of a superior kind, and it was conjectured at the time to be the burgess box so frequently mentioned in the above Code. I have not been able to trace any remnant of this old curiosity.

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Up to the time of this Code of Laws there is no indication that the Corporation were in possession of any estates whatever, and it seems therefore probable that the whole of their revenue was derived from the contents of this box, which has already been referred to as "the embryonic form of our present Borough Fund."

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P. 91.

We now come to two further Ordinances, which are inscribed on the Burgess Roll and the dates of which are to be inferred from internal evidence. The first of these is "An Ordinance made by Sir Humphrey Stanley, Knt., High Steward of the Town of Walsall; Richard Tooy, Mayor; and others," the twenty-five of the town aforesaid. Art. 1 ordains that "if any of the said XXV upon sufficient warning do not appear when required by the Mayor or any of his successors he is to be fined for each offence 12d., to be levied by the Mayor and put into the Burgess Box." Art. 2 ordains that "if any of the said XXV shall utter, show, or disclose any counsel moved for the common weal of the town, upon proof he should forfeit for his offence 3/4, to be levied by the Mayor and put into the Burgess Box, besides which he was to be put out of the fellowship of the XXV and Councill of the said Town, and never after to be called as one of them." Art. 3 ordains that "if any variance, bate, or discord be had by any of the XXV they should abide the ordinance and judgment of the said Councill and the XXV that have no interest in the said matter of variance, and if they would not abide the said ordinance they were to be put out of the said company by all their agreement."

These three articles are merely recapitulations of Nos. V., VI., and VII. in the Code of Laws. It is notable that the number of the Council is increased to XXV, probably from the addition of the High Steward; the fines also are now levied by the Mayor and not the Bailey as in the Code. The date of this Ordinance can at present only be conjectured, but it belongs probably to the years 1497-1501, Richard Tooy being Mayor somewhere about this period.

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The second Ordinance is also made by "S<sup>r</sup> Hoimfray Stanley, Knygth, Hyghe Stuard of the Town of Walsale; Wiliam Marchald, Meyre," and others described as "the XXV of the Town aforeseyd." This consists of six articles, mainly identical with Nos. X., XIII., XIV., XVIII., and XIX. of the Code of Laws. Art. 1 provides that "the Mayor and his successors shall make and receive Burgesses in his year, and shall render account of them at the end of his year of office, after which they were to be registered and set in the Burgess Book, the said Book and Burgess Box to be put in the treasure coffer, there to remain till the next account." Art. 2 ordains that "the Churchwardens shall come to their accounts once in the year, and if they do well shall continue in office." Art. 3 states that "the Mayor and Churchwardens shall come to their accounts on St. Clement's Day and upon St. Katern's Day bothe if necessary." Art. 4 ordains that "if any Burgess has not paid his money or any part thereof, when the Mayor comes to his account and will not then pay it, he shall not be received after unless he pay 10/- for his fine." Art. 5 ordains that "if any man's son, servant, or prentice be taken in the street or at the alehouse after IX. of the clock without a lawful excuse, he should be taken to 'Warde,' and the Bailey should have 8d. for each offence and 2d. to the Burgess Box." Art. 6 ordains that "the Mayor shall call upon the old Mayor and the Wardens to make their accounts before him at the days above written, and if he neglect this Ordinance he was to pay to the Burgess Box 6/8."

This second Ordinance belongs most likely to the year 1502 (17 Henry VII.), William Marshall being Mayor for that year, as recorded in one of the Town Deeds.

Cal. of Deeds,  
83.

The office of High Steward, mentioned in the preceding documents, was deemed an honourable one, the duties being nominal, and only on special occasions being called into requisition. The appointment

was bestowed generally upon some person of rank or influence in the neighbourhood, and he had a representative or low steward, who acted as his deputy. Tamworth, Stafford, and Lichfield had similar officers.

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1502.  
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Sir Humphrey Stanley was the third son of Sir John Stanley, of Elford, who claimed descent from the Stanleys of Hooton in Cheshire. Sir John died in 1476 seized of Elford, Pipe, Clifton, Campville, and other lands in Staffordshire. His son Humphrey seems to have taken possession of all these lands, but was disseised of them by his elder brother John. To terminate the suit between the two, an award was made in the 6 Henry VII. (1490-1) by Sir William Stanley, the then Lord Chamberlain and second cousin to the disputants. This deed runs that, "John should convey to Master Henry Edyall and William Harper, Esq. (of Rushall?), the manors of Pype and Clifton, &c.; who should reconvey them to Sir Humphrey in tail-general, remainder to the right heirs of Sir John their father." Edyall and Harper appear to have recovered the estates, but to have held them as trustees until some years after the deaths both of Sir Humphrey and John his son. Sir Humphrey married Ellen, daughter and heiress of Sir James Lee, of Stone. On October 28th, 1485, Sir H. Stanley was created a knight banneret, together with nine others, by Henry VII. ("Pict. Hist.," vol. ii., p. 282.) He lived at Pipe, and was Sheriff of Staffordshire in 9 Henry VII. (1493-4.)

Topographer,  
v. ii, p. 4.

Among the Cathedral Muniments at Lichfield we find a petition to the King (in English) from the Bishop, Dean and Canons, against Sir Humphrey Stanley, for violently cutting off the water supply of the Close from the two springs at Pipe, which William Bell de Pipe had granted to the Dean and Chapter for the sum of 12s. per annum. It is recorded that in 1489 the King, in the presence of the great officers of State, decreed that Sir Humphrey Stanley should not interrupt the Dean and Chapter in repairing the pipes

Salt Coll., v. vi,  
pt. 2, p. 72.

Shaw,  
v. i, p. 309.

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CORPORATION.  
1502.

Cal. of Deeds,  
83.

to bring the said water from his springs near his manor of Pipe. In 1502 (17 Henry VII.) he signs a deed in the Town Chest as "Syn ys call (seneschall) de Walsall, Humfrey Stanley."

Sir Humphrey was in the household of King Henry VII. as one of his body knights, and he seems to have been the prime mover in the atrocious act of assassination of Sir William Chetwynd on Tixall Heath in 9 Henry VII. (1493-4), which is related thus by Dugdale in his "History of Warwickshire":—

"Sir Philip Chetwynd, Knt., departed this life 24 Henry VI. (1445-6), leaving William his grandchild his heir. Which William, afterwards one of the Gentlemen Ushers of the Chamber to King Henry VII., became so much envied by Sir Humphrey Stanley (then of Pipe, Co. Stafford), one of the Knights for the body to the same King, and Sheriff for that county, 9 Henry VII., as that by means of a counterfeit letter, in the name of Randolph Brereton, Esq., delivered on Friday night before the feast of St. John the Baptist's Nativity, requesting his meeting with him at Stafford the next morning by five of the clock; being allured out of his house at Ingestre, and passing thitherwards accordingly, with no more attendance than his own son and two servants, he was waylaid on Tixall Heath by no less than twenty persons, whereof seven were of the said Sir Humphrey's own family, some with bows and others with spears, all armed with brigandines and coats of mail, who, issuing out of a sheepcote and a deep, dry pit, furiously assaulted him, saying that he should die, and accordingly killed him; the said Sir Humphrey at that time passing by with at least twenty-four persons on horseback, upon pretence of hunting a deer. All which the petition to the King, made by Alice, his widow, wherein she craves that the said Sir Humphrey and his servants might answer for it, doth manifest."

From other accounts it appears that Sir Humphrey had interest enough at Court to silence the matter, and that the petition of Alice was wholly unattended to.

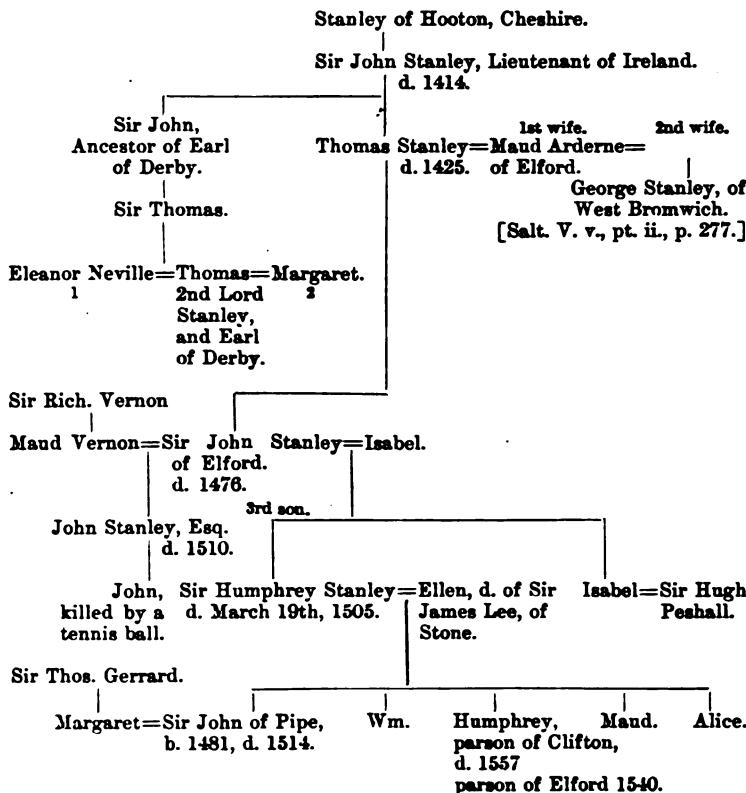
Sir Humphrey died March 12th, 1505 (20 Henry VII.), and was buried under a marble tomb, plated with brass, on the floor of the Chapel of St. Nicholas in Westminster Abbey, with his effigy, in the habit of a knight, and this inscription:—"Here lies Humphrey Stanley, Knt. of the body of the most excellent Prince Henry the Seventh, King of England, who died March 12 A.D. 1505. May God have mercy on his soul. Amen." At each corner of the marble was once a brass shield, and about the centre a large one of four quarters, formerly bearing the arms of Stanley,

Latham, Stafford, Pipe, and Campville, according to Keep much defaced. The four small shields bore, in all probability, the same arms as the four quarters respectively of the central one. The family of Stanley had been the most powerful instruments in establishing Henry upon the throne, and Dean Stanley remarks that "Sir Humphrey, with Lord Stanley and other relatives, had in the battle of Bosworth fought on the victorious side, and hence his burial, together with other members of the Derby family, in the chapel of St. Nicholas." Sir Humphrey left several children, the elder of whom, John of Pipe, was born about 1481, and died in 1514.

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CORPORATION.  
1502.

Hist. of  
Westminster  
Abbey, p. 197.

### PEDIGREE OF SIR H. STANLEY.





THE  
CORPORATION.  
1421.  
—

Mention may now be fitly made of the Corporation estates, which about this time came into the possession of the town.

Cal. of Deeds,  
42, 44.

These estates are situated about six miles from Leamington, near Offchurch, in Warwickshire, and at that time comprised the manor of Bascote and lands at Long Itchington and Stockton. There are in the Town Chest many deeds relating to the early possessors of these estates, and from these we learn that in the year 1421-2 (9 Henry V.) they came into the hands of Thomas Mollesley and Margery his wife, who also appear to have possessed other lands in the same county.

Plot, p. 314.

This Thomas Mollesley is described as of Moxhull, in Warwickshire, but in other documents as of Walsall, and Plot states that "he lived, it is supposed, at a house now one Mr. Sheppard's, where they will show you the heads of Moseley and his wife." He is assumed by Dugdale to have married a widow of one of the Lyles, who are afterwards mentioned. He was probably connected with the Mollesleys, or Moseleys, of Bilston. Roger Mollesley is mentioned among the burgesses in 1377, and again in 1416 (4 Henry V.).

Burgess Roll.

Cal. of Deeds,  
51.

In 1441 Thomas Mollesley grants to Sir Richard Vernon and others the manor of Bascote, &c., and the Vernon Chantry is established in this same year.

Walsdale  
Chartulary.

Cal. of Deeds,  
54, 55.

On September 21st, 1447 (26 Henry VI.), Thomas Mollesley and Henry Flaxale found a chantry in Walsall Church, and endow it, for two priests to celebrate mass daily. A probate copy of the will of Thomas Mollesley is still preserved, and is dated 3rd January, 1451 (30 Henry VI.). In the same year (6th December) he grants a power of attorney to John Gynne to deliver to William Lyle and William Magottesone seisin of the manor of Bascote. No mention is made of Thomas Mollesley and his wife after this date, and I therefore assume that he died about this period, leaving the said William Lyle and William Magottesone trustees of his Warwickshire lands, left for the maintenance of his chantry in the church of

Walsall; for the keeping up of a light or obit in the same, and also in the Abbey Church of Hales Owen. By an Indenture dated December 20th, 30 Henry VI. (1451), William Lyle covenants to pay to the Abbot and Convent of Hales Owen an annual rent of nine marks, issuing out of the manor of Bascote, to the use of the said Thomas Mollesley 'et animæ suæ.' And after the death of the said Thomas Mollesley, the nine marks being received, the Abbot and his successors were to keep one mark "for their labour in distributing the remaining eight marks at the obit of the said Thomas Mollesley at Walsall, and this by the oversight of the Vicar of the Church of Walsall and of all the Chaplains of the Guild of St. John the Baptist and of all the faithful of the same church."

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CORPORATION.  
1451.  
—

The Moseley Dole will be fully considered further on, and it may in this place be merely observed that there is no proof that such a design ever formed part of the original meaning of the bequest, but that it was an after action on the part of the feoffees, who were prevented by the Reformation from openly applying it in masses for the souls of Mollesley and his wife, and therefore distributed the gift to each person, with the understanding that they should pray for them.

Plot states that the Masters of the Guild of St. John the Baptist received the rents and kept the courts at Bascotte, but made their accounts to the Mayor. When, in 5 Edward VI. (1551-2), the Masters and Warden ceased, there was a Warden appointed who received the rents, &c., and who was subsequently represented by the Town Warden. Plot, p. 318.

The confusion which prevails as to the early disposition of these estates is deepened by the fact that several important deeds mentioned by Plot and others are now missing. The Commissioners of Public Charities, in their report issued in 1726, state that it appeared to them that the lands belonged to the Corporation, and that the Dole was only customary, and might be continued or omitted as the Corporation pleased; while another Commission, taken in 1825, states that in the deeds themselves the grant of the

THE CORPORATION. manor is made to the grantees and their heirs absolutely without any limitation whatever.

1456. Cal. of Deeds, 61. 34 Henry VI. (1456.) William Lyle now appears as sole lord, and 'renews' the "Rental of the Manor of Bascote," which indeed he appears by a deed (Cal. 56), dated in 1453, to have possessed alone, probably as surviving trustee. In 1466 (6 Edward IV.) he leases the manor of Bascote to William Arderne for £3 6s. 8d. per annum, and two years later we find a lease endorsed "A lease of certain lands at Bascotte" granted by Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, Walter Wrattlesley, Knt., Magister John Comber, Vicar Perpetual of the Church at Walesshale, the two chaplains and others, as it would seem trustees on the death of William Lyle.

Ibid., 63, 65. Ibid., 78. In 1488 (3 Henry VII.) the manor is again rented by the town trustees to Richard Arderne at the rent of 5 marks 11s. 10d., and the said Richard Arderne is to collect the rents due to the said trustees in Bascote, Itchington, and Stockton. On the back of this deed it is stated that "the said Richard Arderne shall have all the heriots that fall within the same places, 'bothe quycke and dede,' for a noble apiece."

For the following five-and-twenty years the town appears to have enjoyed uninterrupted possession of the estates, but towards the close of this period the title to them was disputed by John Lyle of Moxhull, supposed to have been a son of the William Lyle previously mentioned.

Dugdale, p. 242. Dugdale, in his "History of Warwickshire," concludes that the estates had descended to this John Lyle as a trustee, and that instead of applying the produce thereof to such purpose, he denied that the property was in trust and pretended that it was his own inheritance. This conclusion, as we have already seen, is not borne out by the Corporation deeds.

From the same authority we learn that the inhabitants of Walsall went to Moxhull and drove away Lyle's cattle, which unjustifiable act he does not seem to have resented, because he was liable to be brought to account for this trust estate in his hands.

## DESCENT OF MANOR OF BASCOTE.

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CORPORATION.

Breton Family.

Dugdale, p. 242.

Peter de Livesay,  
of Arley,  
by purchase.  
Rebelle with E. of Lancaster, 1322.

The Crown,  
by escheat. 1324.

Sir John Rochford,  
of Arley.

Sir Ralph Rochford.

Thomas Seyvil and others.  
by deed, 1402.

Cal. of Deeds,  
31.

Crosby and others,  
1415.

Ibid, 34.

Father William Morton,  
1420.

Ibid, 43.

John Lee, Wrygthe, and Smythe, Trustees,  
1421.

Ibid, 46.

Thomas Mollesley=widow of Lisle.  
of Moxhull. 1429.  
Founder of Chantry.

Ibid, 80.

Sir Rich Vernon and others,  
1441.

Ibid, 81.

Wm. Lyle and Wm. Magotsone,  
in trust for Walshall.  
1451.

Ibid, 85.

John Lyle.

Richard Hurst and John Ford,  
of Walshall.

Feoffees for Walshall.  
6 Henry VIII. (1514-5.)

Ibid, 87.

THE  
CORPORATION.

In 1514 the town concludes a suit which it had commenced against John Lyle. The Award which records this bears date February 10, 5 Henry VIII. (1514), and recites that—

Cal. of Deeds,  
no.

"There had afore that time been variance, discord, and debate depending between John Lyle, of Moxhull, in the county of Warwick, and the Mayor, Burgesses, and Inhabitants of the Town and Lordship of Walsall, touching the right, title and possession of the Manor of Bascote, Itchington and Stockton, in the county of Warwick, with all the lands, &c., to the same belonging, and that both the same parties, in eschewing of further inconvenience, had submitted and put them to the arbitrament and award of Sir Thomas Lovell, Knt., Treasurer, and had bound themselves in the sum of £40, to perform the same award. The said Thomas Lovell, by the advice of Thomas Pigott and Anthony Fitzherbert, Sergeants of the Law, made his award, and thereby awarded that the said Mayor, Burgesses and Inhabitants, and their heirs and successors should, from that day forth, peaceably have, occupy, possess and enjoy to them and their heirs and successors for ever the said Manor of Bascote, Itchington and Stockton, with all lands, &c., thereto belonging, without let or interruption of the said John Lyle, or his heirs, or any of them, or by their means and interest, and that the said John Lyle should enfeof and cause to be ——— by deed, fine, release, recovery or otherwise, as should be devised by the learned counsel of the said Mayor, Burgesses and Inhabitants ——— should be reasonably required, at the cost and charge of the said Mayor, Burgesses and Inhabitants, to make sure the above said manor, lands, &c., to the said Mayor, Burgesses and Inhabitants, their heirs and successors for ever. And he awarded that the said John Lyle should deliver to the said Mayor, Burgesses and Inhabitants, and their heirs and successors, all evidence, charters, and muniments, that he, or any person for him, had concerning the said manor, &c., for which premises to be performed and kept by the said John Lyle, the said Mayor, Burgesses and Inhabitants should pay to the said John Lyle £10."

Pic. History, v.  
ii, p. 320.

The Sir Thomas Lovell mentioned in the preceding deed was an important minister both in the reign of Henry VII. and also that of Henry VIII. He was K.G., Treasurer of the Royal Household, and Constable of the Tower, and, according to Holinshed, one of Henry VII's. "right deere and familiar freends." On the accession of Henry VIII., he was appointed, through the influence of the old Countess of Richmond, as one of the members of his first council together with other honours. Hall, who terms him "a sage knight," states that he was one of those left in charge of the queen, when her

husband left her for the siege of Terouenne. He is also a familiar character to readers of Shakespeare's play of Henry VIII. His autograph signature is found on the Burgess Roll as allowing or approving of the ordinance by Sir H. Stanley. Sir Thomas died in 1524.

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CORPORATION.

After receiving the award, two men, Richard Hurst and John Forde, appear to have carried the case on behalf of the town before the Court of Westminster, and to have legally recovered the estates in Easter term 6 Henry VIII. (1514), before Robert Rede, Knt., and other Justices *in banco*, and in the following year these same two individuals formally convey to Richard Hanes, Nicholas Wodewarde, chaplains, and a number of other Walsall men, the Manor of Bascote, with lands in Bascote, together with lands at Itchington and Stockton. Dated Bascotte, August 8th, 7 Henry VIII. (1515).

Cal. of Deeds,  
87.

Referring again to the Commissioners' Report of 1823, we find it stated that in the year 1552 (6 Ed. VI.), a lease of part of this property was granted by "the Mayor and his brethren or Commonalty of the Town of Walsall." This deed appears to be missing, as it is not described in the Calendar, and this is to be the more regretted because it is the first time we meet with the words "Mayor and Commonalty," and the deed doubtless bore the impression of the old Corporation Seal.

This seal, which may here be fitly described, is deeply cut in copper, and contains in the field three Fleur de Lis of France, and the three Lions of England, quarterly, surmounted by a coronet, with two lions addorsed and regardant, as supporters, their tails being interlaced. The coronet is encircled with Fleurs de Lis, of which five are visible. There are no crosses, as there would be if the English Crown were represented. The seal bears the following inscription in old English characters: "**S. cce Maiores & comunitatis Bille dni (Rege de Walsale.**" this being extended as "Sigillum commune Maioris

THE  
CORPORATION.  
1524.  
—

et communitatis villæ Domini Regis de Walsale." This may be Englished thus: "The Common Seal of the Mayor and Commonalty of our Lord the King's Town of Walsale." It may be noted that the last king who quartered the French Fleurs de Lis and the English Lions without any addition, was Edward VI., who died in 1553, and the first who adopted the use of only three Fleurs de Lis, instead of shewing them, as it was called, "semee," was Henry IV. It may, therefore, be safely assumed that the seal is not of a later date than 1553, nor earlier than 1405.

The arms on the seal are not the same as what are called the Town Arms, viz., "the bear and ragged staff," a device dating from the time of the Warwicks, and used generally to distinguish the corporate property and belongings. The "bear and ragged staff" has a history of its own, which carries the enquirer far into the regions of romance. Here we may only note that Morvid, a legendary Earl of Warwick, fought with and overcame in single combat a mighty giant, who, it is said, came against him armed with a club, which was a tree pulled up by the roots and stripped of its branches. In remembrance of this great victory over the giant he incorporated with his arms the "ragged staff." The bear was added at some later period. One of the most curious features connected with this historic badge, is that the head of the bear is muzzled, and this has been associated with some dishonourable action on the part of one of the ancient earls. The muzzle has doubtless some heraldic significance, but its exact nature seems still a subject for enquiry.

Bontell's  
"Heraldry,"  
p. 214.

P. 90.

In 16 Henry VIII. (1524-5), Robert Acton, Esq., then Lord of the Manor, took proceedings against those in authority in Walsall in a document already given in full. Here we may merely remark that the Hopkyns, Dingley, and Woodward, who are therein mentioned, appear at that time to have held leading positions in the town. Richard Hopkyns was Mayor, Nicholas Woodward was Chaplain, and Richard Dingley

Master of the Guild of St. John. This document shews a curious condition of social order in the town, and contains various charges against the three above-mentioned persons, who in justification "doe say and affirme that they be free." The great clubbes, "which have bin of longe time sett and hanged upon highe in the Town Halle of Walsale," "Bayard's Bell" and "Bayard's Box," are also graphically described. A few of these staves are still preserved, but originally there must have been many more, for in a borough account dated 1661 we find as an item, "paide to 45 club men that walked ye faire 7s. 6d."

THE  
CORPORATION.  
1524-1586.  
—

In 1547 (1 Edward VI.) those estates, which had escaped the rapacity of the eighth Henry, at the time when the great religious houses were dissolved, were confiscated by the Crown by the statute of 1 Edward VI., and thus they remained until the 28th Elizabeth.

Statutes of  
Edward VI.

Among these estates were probably those of Bascote, but part at least of them seem to have been rented by the town for the use of the Moseley Dole, as in 6 Edward VI. (1552-3) we find the Mayor and his brethren granting a lease of portion of this property. The seizure of these lands by the Crown, whether on the ground of their being devoted to superstitious uses or otherwise, seems to point strongly to their original connection being with the Church rather than with the Corporation.

P. 181.

In 1586 (28 Eliz.), the lands already described as being confiscated, together with others in and around Walsall, were re-granted to the town. The grant is by Queen Elizabeth, at the petition of James Crofte, Comptroller of the Household, to Francis Craddock, of the Middle Temple, London, Esq., and Michael Shawe, gent., of lands and tenements (including the "Town Hall") in Walsall, Co. Staff., Great Blockwich, alias Bloxwich and Bentley, same Co., and in Bascott, Itchington, and Stockton, Co. Warwick (localities specified); together with all issues, rents, reversions, &c. To be held by certain rent charges as specified. Dated Wealdhall, 13 July, An. 28 Eliz.

Cal. of Deeds,  
130.



THE  
CORPORATION.  
—  
1586-1606.

(1586). This deed is in Latin, and measures 2ft. 8in. by 3ft. 4in. It has an ornamental heading, and a portrait of Queen Elizabeth in outline within the initial letter. A portion of the Great Seal, of white wax, enclosed in a tin box, accompanies the deed. It has been assumed by several authorities that the grant was made in Walsall itself, and that the Queen stayed on this visit either at the "Red Lion Inn," which formerly stood in Ablewell Street, or at Bescot Hall. We have, however, no authority for this save tradition, and the slender resemblance between Wealdhall and Walsall. At this period, and in a deed of such importance, it is hardly likely that the name could have been so incorrectly stated, nor have we any account by Laneham or any other historian of her visiting the neighbourhood at this time.

It may be as well to indicate here the various remaining deeds in the Calendar which refer to the Bascote estate. The chief of them are Nos. 160, 87<sup>(10)</sup>, 162, 180, 181, 184, 187, 191, 193, &c. From a survey taken by Wm. Fowler, gent., in 1659, the total contents of the Bascote estates amounted to 300 acres 1 rood and 26 perches. In 1874 they had dwindled down to 240 acres, and there were nine cottages on the estates rented at 1s. per week. Some of these lands had been sold by the Corporation, but other parts appear to have been gradually lost. An uncalendared record in the Town Chest contains a survey of lands belonging to the Corporation on November 1st, 1649, from which it is clear that formerly they were much more extensive and also more lucrative than at the present day.

Cal. of Deeds,  
150.

In 1606 (4 Jas. I.) an Inquisition was held at Wolverhampton as to the liability of feoffees (*i.e.*, the Corporation) to keep in repair "Tame Bridge" and a wooden bridge and way adjoining, as far as a place called "Fryars park corner," at a certain tree standing in a lane called "the dead woman's Buryall." The Commissioners direct that various repairs are to be made, and the feoffees acknowledge their liability.

An enquiry made in 1855 also decided that the Corporation was legally liable.

THE  
CORPORATION.

1578-1627.

Cal. of Deeds,  
119, 220, 237.

The year 1578 was notable for a long and stormy contention between the Corporation and Mr. Thomas Lane, of Bentley. The latter complained that Thomas Wollaston, William Gorway, Henry Stone, and others "had riotously assembled and burnt down his house at Bentley, cut down his trees, destroyed his fences, and depastured their cattle on his lands, and he prays damages and redress." The defendants admitted the acts complained of, but alleged that "the lands were part of Bentley Hays, which was part of the Forest of Cannock; that the inhabitants of Walsall had from time immemorial had right of common of pasture for all manner of cattle upon the Forest; that Thomas Lane was Bailiff of the Hays under the Queen, and had abused his office by building upon the Hays and enclosing portions of it, whereby the pasture of the men of Walsall was diminished, and wherefore they had done the acts complained of." From evidence taken before Commissioners at Brewood it appears that until the year 1530 there were large quantities of red, roe and fallow deer upon the Hays, and that the Hays itself properly belonged to the King for the maintenance of his game. In the reign of Henry VIII. men were sent down who destroyed the deer and cut down the great oaks. In the Town Chest are numerous records relating to this dispute, some of which tend to show that it was carried on in a very hostile and acrimonious manner. The case was eventually compromised by Mr. Lane paying to the Corporation a sum of money, out of which the Bentley Hays Charity was founded, whilst the inhabitants of Walsall released their right of common.

Passing on to the year 1610, we find the then Lord of the Manor, Sir Richard Wilbraham, in conflict with the burgesses as to the right of taking heriots and imposing fines. This question has already been fully stated. P. 98.

We come now to the year 1627 (3 Chas. I.),

THE  
CORPORATION.  
1627.  
—

a year pregnant with interest and importance as being the one in which, by the energy of the burgesses, the first Consolidated Charter was obtained for the town. That this was provoked in a large degree by the struggle which had taken place a few years before with Sir Richard Wilbraham is more than probable.

On the 25th March, 1627, Nicholas Parker, of Walsall, made a will, by which he left £100 to procure a Charter for the better government of the town. Until this time Walsall had been a Borough only by prescription, or the right derived from immemorial usage. Charters containing certain privileges had been received from Ed. III. and Henry IV., but they were vague and indefinite; and the Mayor and Corporation, although for a long time they had exercised the rights of their office, yet did so without any sure or positive authority, in proof of which we find that certain doubts had arisen, and others were thought likely to arise (*vide* Charter), respecting various liberties of the Borough. In consequence of these doubts, and being provided with ample funds by the will of Nicholas Parker, it was determined that an effort should be made for their thorough removal; and in June of this same year four individuals were chosen as a deputation to proceed to London and procure a new and comprehensive Charter. Their names were Richard Stone, Henry Stone (his son), Joseph Clarkson, and Curteys or Robert Stone, which of the latter is not quite apparent. They seem to have been persons of influence and position in the town, for both Henry and Richard Stone are mentioned in the Charter as two of the first capital burgesses. They put up at Bisom's Inn, in St. Lawrence Street, London, and they have left behind them a document entitled "Charges about oure Corporacon." This statement is now missing, and does not appear to be amongst those which are uncatalogued among the Town Records. The account amounts to £109 11s. 11d., and is sufficiently curious to be quoted in full.

Notes and  
Queries, 1884.

## "CHARGES ABOUT OURE CORPORACON."

	£	s.	d.	THE CORPORATION. 1627.
Spente in going to London, 4 of vs (us) ... ..	xxx			
To mr. walshe for his Counsell ... ..	xx			
To his man for wryting oure artycles in pap. (paper) ... ..	v			
To mr. wakeringe for his advyse and direcion 2 sevrall tymes...	xx			
To 2 Scryvens for Ingrossing oure artycles in pchmt 2 severall } tymes for the kynge ... ..	viii			
To my lo. keeps (Lord keeper's) secretare for exhibitinge oure } peticon and gettinge vs an aunswere... ..	x			
To his man to remeber his wde (word) ... ..	ii	vi		
Payd for a Statute booke ... ..	vii	ii		
ffor another booke, viz. the paper Booke basted ... ..	i	iv		
To the Scryven for makinge our bonde to mr. Rbt. Stone and } mr. Calke ... ..	v			
To mr. Allison for Drawinge the king's Attorney his answears } to the kinge ... ..	x			
Payd for a Sugar lofe for mrs. Lacy ... ..	xviii	vi		
ffor another for mrs. Berrington ... ..	xvi	vi		
gave her Children and Svants when the kings hand was gotten	vi			
To mr. Wigmore for drawinge oure booke extraordynarie and } for expedicon ... ..	x			
To his man to make spede to Ingrosse itt ... ..	vi			
Payd for the hyre of 2 horses to the courts for mr. Berrington } and mr. Thacker ... ..	iii	iv		
To mr. Attorney for allowinge oure Artycles and for his paynes	x			
To his Secretare and mr. Wigmore for Drawinge and In- } grossinge oure booke being XC sheetes att 2s. a sheete	ix			
To the dore kep. for his ffee ... ..	xx			
To mr. Berrington uppon oure agreemt to pcure the kinge's } warrant to mr. Attorney and his hande, 3 sevrall tymes	xx			
ffor Ingrossinge our booke for the Signett, being 3 tymes of pymt	xx			
ffor the lyke for the pryvy seale ... ..	xx			
ffor the fees of the Signett for 3 skynnes of pchmt, att 3l. a } skynne ... ..	ix			
ffor the lyke for the pryvy seale ... ..	ix			
To my Lo. pryvy seale, viz., my Lo. of Worcester, his Secretare } for expedicon for the Signett and pryvy seale	xx			
To the Clarks of the Chamber for theire fees ... ..	xx			
To the King's pryncypall Secritarie, viz: my Lo. Conway, his } man when he got the king's hande ... ..	xx			
To Councill for prestinge (presenting) oure booke after itt } was drawn and after itt was Ingrossed ... ..	xx			
Left att london to dyscharge the greate Seale ... ..	xx			
Payd for searchinge in the Chancery for Langthorne and for } mr. Wm. pkrs. (Parkers) will in the prgatyve courts	iii	iv		
Spente in wyne and dyners att sevrall tymes to mr. Delves, } mr. Berrington and others to further oure suyte ... ..	ii	xi	iv	
To Curteys for hyringe mr. Rich. Stones horse ... ..	i	iii	vi	
ffor 2 leather baggs ... ..		ii	iv	
ffor lynsy stockings and socks for mr. h. Stone ... ..		ii	ii	

THE CORPORATION. 1627. —	ffor coton broges for him .. .. .	i	vi
	ffor mr. h. Stones horse and pvender in london ... ..	xi	ii
	ffor Jo. Clarkson's horse there ... ..	ii	vi
	Spente by h. Stone when he came home ... ..	xii	
	Oure chargs for oure dyett whylst we laye in london ... ..	vi	xviii iii
	Payd for oure washinge and to the poore in london ... ..	viii	vii
	ffor oure 2 horses pvender and hay ... ..	ii	xi iiiii
	Gave the chambllyns, ostlers, and mayds att Bisoms Inne ..	iv	vii
	ffor shewinge oure horses ... ..	ii	
	Spente by vs 2 (us two) from london home ... ..	xviii	
Total ... ..		cix	xi xi

Cal. of Deeds,  
209.

The Charter itself was dated at Canbury on the 5th October, 3 Chas. I. (1627.) It is written upon four skins of stout parchment, and still has attached to it a fragment of the Great Seal, for the "dyscharge of which was paid £xx. o. o." This Charter was confirmed by Charles II. on February 22nd, 1674. It was published by Grymston Brothers, of Wolverhampton, and a copy of it is given in Pearce's "History of Walsall." The Charter states, in substance, as follows:—

"Whereas the Borough or Town and Foreign of Walsall in our County of Stafford are of Ancient Demesne of our Crown of England, and that the said town of Walsall, or the ancient town of Merchants and Inhabitants of the same, by the name of the Mayor and Burgesses, &c., from time whereof the memory of man is not to the contrary, have peaceably had and enjoyed divers Jurisdictions, Franchises, Liberties, Immunities and Privileges, as well by prescription as by reason and means of severall Charters, granted, confirmed, and by Letters Patent of our Progenitors or Predecessors, Kings of England to them heretofore made. And whereas we are informed that certain doubts and questions have arisen and may arise concerning certain liberties of the Borough or town and Foreign aforesaid, and thereupon our beloved subjects, now Inhabitants of the Borough and Foreign aforesaid, have humbly besought us that we will give and extend to them our munificence, royal grace and liberty in their behalf, Therefore we have willed, ordained, granted, and constituted that the aforesaid Borough or Town of Walsall shall be for ever hereafter a free Borough of itself, and that the Mayor and Burgesses, and also all and singular the Burgesses and Inhabitants of the Borough and Town of Walsall, by whatsoever name or names they have been heretofore incorporated, shall be by virtue of these presents one body corporate and politic, in deed, fact, and name, by the name of The Mayor and Commonalty of the Borough and Foreign of Walsall, and they are empowered to take grants of lands not exceeding in the whole the clear yearly value of £20."

The Charter provides for the peaceable and orderly government of the borough, and for its permanent freedom; for the constitution, election, and powers of the Corporation, composed of a Mayor, twenty-four Capital Burgesses, with a Recorder, Town Clerk, two Sergeants-at-Mace, and a Beadle; for the enactment of reasonable and necessary by-laws, with suitable powers of dealing with offences against these laws; for the appointments of Recorder, Town Clerk, and Justices of the Peace; for a Court of Record for the recovery of debts and damages; for a Court of Justice and a Jury of twelve, for the trial of petty offences and misdemeanours; for a public gaol; for exemption of the burgesses from payment of toll or impost, in as ample a form as the people of the Manor of Walsall formerly were; for two fairs, one on St. Matthias' Day, February 24th, the other on the Tuesday before the feast of St. Michael (29th September), with the appropriation of various benefits and tolls arising from such fairs; for a Court of Pie Poudre during fair times, where a plaintiff could appear with dusty feet and obtain summary justice against offenders; for the protection of the borough from various writs of *quo warranto* and others, and lastly for the maintenance and security of the rights and privileges enjoyed by the lord of the manor, together with a "view of frank pledge."

THE  
CORPORATION.  
1627-1674.  
—

Such were the chief provisions of the Charter, under which until the year 1835 the town was governed.

As before stated, the Charter was confirmed by Charles II., on February 22nd, 1674 (13 Charles II.). Previously to this the town had become very disaffected, and from the State Papers we learn that there was great intestine disturbance arising from the extravagance of the preachers, and from the conflict between the magistracy and the corporation itself, as also from dissensions among the members themselves of this latter body. Thus we are told that "at the Restoration (1660), fifteen out of twenty-four

THE persons (*i.e.*, the corporation) connected with the  
 CORPORATION. borough refused the oath of allegiance, and thereby  
 1663. lost their positions.”

— On July 8th, 1663, we find Sir Brian Boughton  
 writing from Beaudesert to Secretary Bennett, that  
 State Papers, “Walsall Corporation has gathered a sum to renew  
 1663. their charter, and purchase such a freedom that no  
 justice of peace of the county shall have to do with  
 them, which if they effect, the town is their own;  
 other corporations are doing the like. The town is  
 so disaffected that the royal party rather wish the  
 charter abrogated than confirmed. Many of the old  
 soldiers go armed, and one of them who served  
 Oliver sixteen years and has plenty of money has  
 taken a cottage residence.” On the same date, Sir  
 Brian sends to Williamson, his clerk, a request of the  
 loyal part of Walsall Corporation, who desire to pre-  
 vent the renewal of the Charter, and will give him  
 £20 if he will have it prevented. On the 20th  
 July, the same authority writes again from Beaudesert  
 to Williamson, and says, “If the disaffected part  
 of the Corporation of Walsall succeed in renewing  
 their charter so that no justices have to do with them,  
 they may hold conventicles, having 4 ejected ministers  
 living there,” and he asks his friend “to help the well  
 affected to a solicitor who will prevent this.” The  
 names of two of these ejected ministers are preserved.  
 One was the Rev. Nathaniel Mansfield, of Armitage.  
 After living at Wolverhampton he came to Walsall,  
 where he seems to have preached frequently, and  
 where subsequently he died. The other was the Rev.  
 Richard Hilton, of West Bromwich, a good and  
 accomplished man, who died here in 1706.

The *Loyal Protestant*, of Thursday, March 1st,  
 1682, has the following paragraph: “February 28th.  
 The Town of Walsall, in Staffordshire, having  
 surrendered their Charter up to his Majesty, He  
 according to his accustomed Clemency and Goodness  
 hath been graciously pleased to grant them another,  
 and we learn that several others will do the like.”

Of this second Charter, only a copy is preserved among the Town Records, the original being nowhere to be found. Ti  
CORPORation  
1629.  
—

In the Charter we have distinct mention of the "Foreign of Walsall," which, however, existed for a long time anterior. Thus in 1485 we find a lease "of the Manor of the Forren of Walshall," and still earlier in the Charter by William Ruffus in 1197, Cal. of I we have the expression "forinsic (foreign) woods." The word Foreign is also mentioned in the Churchwardens' Accounts in 1690 and 1691, and from these accounts we likewise learn that the Borough and Foreign were frequently at war over the church expenses and church rates. Foreign is a very old manorial word, and the Foreign of Walsall, from the peculiarity of its position on the borders of Cannock Chase, was probably gradually acquired or reclaimed, and attached piecemeal to the Borough. The Foreign bore also the name of the Liberties, while at some Plot, p. remote time Rushall was probably included within it. The word occurs in the case of other towns of which Ross, Ludlow, Kidderminster, and Birmingham may be cited as instances, as also the "foreign wood" of the Hay of Hopewas (an. 1300).

We must now pass back to the year 1629, when Cal. of I the Corporation were engaged in a law suit against Ann Parker and others, respecting an annuity of £20 bequeathed by Nicholas Parker for the poor of the parish of Walsall and of Rushall. The dispute was finally referred to the Court of Chancery, and decided by that Court after an existence of several years.

For the year 1636 there is still preserved the Ibid., 227  
261 art Writ for the unpopular tax of "Ship Money," addressed among others "To the Mayor and Commonalty of the Borough and Forren of Walsall." With the Writ was issued a written paper of instructions directed to the High Sheriff, and explaining how much he was to collect to make up the required sum. From this we learn that Lichfield was rated at £150, Walsall at £32, Stafford at £30, and Newcastle-under-Lyme at £20.



THE  
CORPORATION.  
1636-1733.  
—

Walsall Note  
Book, 100.

From this time down to the Restoration and the regranting of the Charter we lose sight of the Corporation. It is known, however, that they were divided among themselves and sorely pressed during the Civil War, and the following extract from a letter by Sir William Dugdale to Thomas Wollaston, of Walshall, shows the iconoclastic spirit of the conflict: "I am very sorry your antient writings concerning this Mannour (Bascote) or anything else were soe spoyled; it hath bin the fate of many men's evidences in the late turmoyles, the more pittye." It is also a noteworthy fact that the Corporation maces bear the Restoration date of 1660. An old silver badge, with the bear and ragged staff embossed upon it, is in my own possession, and bears the date 1678.

In 1691 the old "Market Crosse" was taken down and rebuilt by the Corporation, and this fact, as we shall see later on, was afterwards admitted as a proof of their ownership of the Markets.

In 1717 it was found necessary to provide some means of accommodation for the poor, and in the following inscription from a tablet erected at the time we trace the germ of the present workhouse: "These houses were bought of Mr. Thomas Harris, of Worcester, by the Corporation, for the use of the poor of Walsall, the Mayor paying yearly to the organist £4," &c. The houses in question were two or three small ones occupying a position on the Church Hill, near the top of Hill Street. They were afterwards enlarged to form the old workhouse.

In 1726 a complaint was entered against the Corporation of Walsall on account of the mismanagement of the charitable bequests belonging to the Borough and Foreign. This subject will be fully considered in another place.

In the year 1733 the growing size and importance of the town led to the removal of the seat of municipal and judicial government from the Market Cross at the top of High Street to its present site. We may here conveniently notice the Guild or Town Hall,

which has been previously spoken of in various deeds, &c. The "Gylde Hall" is first mentioned in the Code of Laws drawn up by the "Maior and his Bredren" in 1440, and its exact position is indicated by a deed dated in 31 Eliz. (1589), by which Thomas Wilbram, then Lord of the Manor, on account of the "love and affection" that he has for the inhabitants of Walsall, leaves to George Hawe, Mayor, and others, chief governors or rulers of the same, a shop, which the said governors had erected in the high street there, with buildings over it, commonly called the "highe crosse," in Walsall, "where heretofore there was an olde crosse standinge called the highe crosse in Walsall, for the beautifyng of the said towne, as also for the provision of places of punishment and correction of dyvers lewde and mysdemeyned persons." The date of erection of this second cross may be conjectured to be a few years anterior to the execution of this deed, i.e., 1580-1589.

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CORPO  
17  
Cal. of  
133.

In 1691 this cross was taken down and rebuilt at the charge of the Corporation, in the mayoralty of John Perks. This Guildhall served its purpose until the year 1734, and a good idea of its plan and position may be gained from the map of the town taken in 1797 and preserved in the Free Library. In close proximity to the old Market Cross stood the usual appendages of those days, the pillory, stocks, and whipping post.

In almost all the old borough towns was to be found a central building serving the compound purpose of judgment hall, market and charity school. A good example was preserved until 1824, at Wednesbury, and consisted of two rooms supported on pillars, with arches underneath, which were used for ordinary market purposes. Two fine specimens still remain at the old towns of Ledbury and Wenlock. Our own Market Cross, which stood until the year 1802 was a rude half-timbered structure, small, inconvenient, and too much of an obstruction to stand against the march of public improvements which set in at that

THE  
CORPORATION.  
1782-1815.  
—  
Town Records.

time, when many old buildings were taken down, and the approach to the church hill was commenced to be cleared. In June, 1734, the old Market Cross, "being an old piece of building, and very much decayed and out of repair," was abandoned, and a new Guildhall was erected in High Street, a spacious building, but of somewhat sombre architecture. A niche above, originally intended, as was said, for a statue of Charles I., contained a figure of Justice, which cost £45, with scales, from some unknown reason, unequally balanced. In 1847 the stocks were removed from the church steps to a position in front of this building, where they remained until 1854, when they were removed by order of the Town Council. A few disjointed fragments are still preserved in a room at the Corporation yard.

The present commodious Town Hall was erected in 1865, upon the site of the old one, the foundation stone being laid with Masonic honours, and amid much popular enthusiasm.

In 1782 the receipts of the Corporation amounted to £290 5s., all of which was derived entirely from rents. The expenditure amounted to £207 15s. 8d. In 1802 the income had risen to £579 15s. 4d., derived entirely from Walsall, Bascote, and Itchington rents.

In 1815 the Corporation constructed the present Pig Market at a cost of £2,000, and the keeper's house may still be recognised by the bear and ragged staff over the doorway. At this time pigs were a large and important item in Walsall trade, and toll has been taken for as many as 2,000 pigs per day. The railways have, however, had the effect of deviating the trade almost entirely to Birmingham and Wolverhampton. The erection of this market gave rise to an attempt on the part of a person named Cox to question the right of the Corporation to the markets. He was summoned for creating a nuisance by erecting stalls for pigs in the High Street, and in his defence urged that the markets were in reality the property of the

lord of the manor; and not of the Corporation. The case was decided in favour of the latter, who brought as evidence of their right a stone from the old Market Crosse, which bore an inscription proving that the cross had been rebuilt by the Corporation in 1692, being six years only from the death of Chas. II., who granted the Charter. This evidence was accepted as decisive in the present case, and the Earl of Bradford, then lord of the manor, disclaimed through his steward any rights in the matter. The case was tried at Stafford, and the verdict of the jury subsequently ratified by the Court of Queen's Bench.

THE  
CORPORATION.  
1815-1872.  
—

In 1824 an important step was taken by the Corporation, who obtained an Act of Parliament for the improvement, watching and lighting of the town, and for the erection of gas works. One of the first improvements carried out under this Act was the construction of Lichfield Street, which supplanted the old way leading across the present Arboretum.

In 1848 another Act was passed entitled "The Walsall Improvement and Market Act, 1848," while another Act, granted in 1850, provided for a more equitable system of rating, for improved sewage arrangements, for new gas works, and various other things. The Commissioners of this Act were the Town Council and three gentlemen elected for that part of the parish of Rushall which was within the Commissioners' District.

By the passing of "The Public Health Act, 1872," the Town Council were constituted the Urban Sanitary Authority for the whole of the Municipal Borough, and in consequence the management of the streets and roads in what were formerly known as the Woodend and Caldmore Highway District and the Bloxwich Highway District, was transferred to the Council, and the Improvement Commissioners ceased to exercise within the confines of the Municipal Borough any of their powers for sanitary purposes. This Act conferred enlarged powers on the Council in relation to Local Government matters, and gave a great impetus to sanitary works.

THE  
CORPORATION.

In July, 1876, was passed "The Walsall Gas Purchase and Borough Extension Act, 1876," for extending the boundaries of the Borough, transferring to the Corporation the powers, duties, and property of the Commissioners acting under the Act of 1848, the purchase of the interest of the Birmingham and Staffordshire Gas Light Company within the Borough, and various other matters. It will be well to indicate briefly the principal changes produced by this Act. The area added to the Borough comprised Ryecroft, the Butts, the top part of Lichfield Street, from a point a little below the upper lodge of the Arboretum, and the right hand side of Buchanan Road. It amounted to 94 acres, containing 611 houses and a population of 3,055 persons, the rateable value of the property being £3,350. Under this Act the Improvement Commissioners ceased to exist, their rights, interests, and liabilities being transferred to the Corporation. The Acts of 1848 and 1850 were repealed, except certain sections relating to the railway company, the town police, the Markets and Fairs, the collection and disposal of sewage water, lighting of the streets, the erection of gas works, &c., &c., and these provisions were amended and extended to the enlarged Borough. The third portion of the Act provided for the transfer to the Corporation of the rights and interests held within the Borough by the Birmingham and Staffordshire Gas Light Company, in consideration of a perpetual annuity of £1,300. Power was also given for the purchase of land at the Pleck for the erection of new gas works, and borrowing powers were conferred upon the Corporation to the extent of £100,000. The borrowing powers conferred by this Act were enlarged by the Corporation Loan Order of 1882.

These Acts have played an important part in the general development and improvement of the town, in the construction and drainage of the streets, and in the system of sanitary arrangements. The first gas works were erected in 1826, at the cost of £4,000.

They were situated near the south-easterly corner of the present Arboretum, at the end of Persehouse Street. In 1850, being insufficient for the rapidly increasing demands made upon them, they were transferred to the large works in Wolverhampton Street, which have a producing power of 130 million cubic feet per annum, and up to 1887 had cost, with the distributing mains, £52,000. In November, 1877, the new gas works, the result of "The Gas Purchase and Extension Act," were completed at the Pleck, at a cost of £58,000.

THE  
CORPORATION  
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In 1823 the distribution of the Moseley Dole gave rise to a good deal of public dissatisfaction, and the Corporation determined to discontinue it, and in its place to build and endow some almshouses. This proposal caused a great amount of popular discontent, and the Mayor and Corporation came in for a large share of ill-feeling. These almshouses were erected in Bath Street, opposite the Burial Ground, in 1825.

In 1835 "The Municipal Reform Act" was passed—a measure which introduced important changes into the local government. By this Act the Borough was divided into three wards—viz., the Bridge Ward, St. George's Ward, and the Foreign Ward; while the Town Council was for the future to consist of a Mayor, six Aldermen, and eighteen Councillors, with a Commission of the Peace (comprising six or more Justices besides the Mayor and ex-Mayor), a Recorder, Town Clerk, and other officers.

The Record Court is now supplanted by the County Court, which sits about four days a month, and has an extensive jurisdiction, comprising Aldridge, Bentley, Bloxwich, Cannock, Cheslyn Hay, Darlaston, Great Barr, Great Wyrley, Hednesford, Huntingdon, Littleworth, Moxley, Norton Canes, Pelsall, Rushall, Shelfield, Walsall, Walsall Wood, Wednesbury, and Wimblebury. The Court has also jurisdiction in Bankruptcy over the district of the Lichfield County Court. The present Judge is William Downes Griffiths, Esq., and the Registrar Frederic Fuhrmann Clarke, Esq.

THE  
CORPORATION.  
1835.  
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The following are the members and officers of the first Town Council, elected after the passing of the Act:

*Mayor.*

CHARLES FORSTER COTTERILL, Esq.

*Aldermen.*

MR. R. JAMES.	MR. S. SMITH.	MR. W. DIXON.
„ J. COWLEY.	„ S. H. POWELL.	„ D. BADGER.

*Councillors.*

MR. E. E. STANLEY.	MR. C. MASON.	MR. J. WOOD.
„ H. W. WENNINGTON.	„ T. HILDICK.	„ J. THORNHILL.
„ J. EGLINGTON.	„ J. WILKES.	„ L. HEAD.
„ T. DUTTON.	„ T. HACKETT.	„ R. JAMES.
„ M. HILDICK.	„ F. SMITH.	„ J. OAKLEY.
„ T. HILL.	„ J. BREWER.	„ J. COTTERELL.

*Recorder.*

NATHANIEL RICHARD CLARKE, Esq.

*Town Clerk.*

WILLIAM COTTERILL, Esq.

In 1834 the income of the Corporation amounted to £944 8s. 8d., and the total amount of their debts seem to have been £1,006 16s. 11d., of which sum £436 1s. 5d. was balance due to the bank.

The following extract from the municipal accounts of 1802 and following years indicates the need that even then existed for a searching Parliamentary enquiry:

		£	s.	d.
1802	Paid John Dickenson for entertainments at Quarter Sessions ... ..	110	0	0
	„ for music, being fair day .. ..	7	0	
	„ Benjamin Barber for sergeants' and bellman's cloaks ... ..	13	8	7
	„ for music when elected Mayor ... ..	10	6	
1809	„ Mr. Charles Perkins a bill for wine... ..	110	10	6
	„ James Deykin for carriage of wine... ..	4	1	5
	„ Hill Waldron and Co. for bottles ... ..	7	10	0
1803	„ John Dickenson, entertainments at Quarter Sessions ... ..	85	12	3
	„ journey to Bascote for three people ... ..	15	8	6
1805	„ for paving High Street ... ..	343	5	8
1806	„ two years' subs. to Walsall Races ... ..	10	10	0
	„ six years' subs. to Charity School ... ..	60	0	0
	„ Mr. Pearce a bill for raising volunteers ... ..	6	8	3

		£	s.	d.	
1810	Apples for Clement's Account ... ..	1	16	0	T1 CORPORATION 1836. -
	Paid a bill for candles for illuminating the Town Hall for peace ... ..	1	1	6	
	.. for pipe of wine, &c. ... ..	126	12	0	
1820	.. for fund for rebuilding St. Matthew's ... ..	100	0	0	
	.. do. do. ... ..	400	0	0	
	.. for the stone figure of Justice placed in front of Town Hall ... ..	45	0	0	
	.. regaling the poor on Coronation of George IV. ... ..	20	0	0	
1826	.. on account of expenses for obtaining the "Town Act" ... ..	620	0	0	
	.. do. do. do. ... ..	100	0	0	
1828	.. first gas bill for Town Hall and Mayor's Parlour ... ..	2	2	6	
	.. Chandeliers for Mayor's Parlour ... ..	63	0	0	

In 1836 the accounts of the old Corporation, from the year 1802, were published, "with the view of doing justice to both the late and present Corporations of Walsall." The book was entitled "A full statement of accounts of the late Corporation of the Borough and Foreign of Walsall, from 1802 to 1835. Taken verbatim from their own books." A copy of this book may be seen in the Free Library.

With the old Corporation passed away several ancient customs and not a few abuses. The name of Capital Burgesses and the fee of £3 payable on their admission disappeared, and the custom common to the Aldermen and Town Clerk of walking to church on each Sunday dressed in their long black gowns.

In 1847 an attempt was made by the Corporation to build a Market Hall at the back of the Dragon Inn. The inhabitants combined in a hearty manner to oppose the scheme, believing that if carried out it would not only be a costly undertaking, but that it would prove prejudicial to the tradespeople. The opposition provoked a complete revolution in the Council, and a fresh election put an end at last to the animosity which had been created.

But little more remains to be added. The rapid growth in size and consequent importance of the town have surrounded the governing body with greatly increased duties and responsibilities, while the expenses have augmented in a corresponding degree.



THE  
CORPORATION.  
1871-1886.

The following table exhibits the increase in the borough expenditure for the years 1871 to 1873:

		BOROUGH EXPENDITURE.		
		1871.	1872.	1873.
Borough Fund	...	£5,600.	£7,134.	£11,983.
Burial Board	...	520.	537.	1,435.
Free Library	...	314.	555.	560.
Commissioners' Town Improvement Account	...	5,047.	7,442.	4,150.
Sewer Account	...	506.	83.	38.
Gas Works Revenue Account	...	15,853.	15,890.	22,421.
Gas Works Capital Account	...	4,131.	5,205.	1,332.
Epidemic Hospital	...	—	1,826.	591.
Total	...	<u>£32,061</u>	<u>£38,672.</u>	<u>£42,528.</u>

		RECEIPTS BY RATES.		
Borough Rate	...	£2,795.	£3,040.	£7,458.
Improvement Rate	...	4,433.	4,905.	3,640.
		<u>£7,228.</u>	<u>£7,954.</u>	<u>£11,098.</u>

The Corporation Accounts are now published annually, and the following are some of the chief items of expenditure for the year ending September, 1886:

		£	s.	d.
Borough Fund	...	14,474	1	0
District Fund	...	23,059	18	10
Sewage Scheme (Loan Account)	...	6,784	2	4
Sewage Farm	...	2,339	12	3
Burial Board	...	696	9	1
Free Library	...	503	4	2
Gas Works Revenue Account	...	37,669	3	9
Gas Works Capital Account	...	3,487	8	7

The records, deeds, and charters belonging to the Corporation are of a very valuable and voluminous character, and in 1882 were tabulated by Mr. Richard Sims, of the British Museum. They extend as far backwards as the reign of King John.

Many town deeds were destroyed during the Civil War, while others appear to have been lost in later years. Half a century ago some of the town archives were pawned to a pawnbroker in Rushall

Street, for what 'express reason is not very clear. They narrowly escaped destruction at this time, from a fire which broke out on the premises. Some still bear the marks of water, and it is quite possible that others of the missing ones were burnt or stolen on this occasion.

THE  
CORPORATION.  
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The list of Mayors is unfortunately incomplete, but the roll as it stands is a longer one than any in the county of Stafford. Other towns, such as Newcastle and Stafford, boast indeed of an earlier pedigree, but their ancient archives are so incomplete that it is very questionable whether they could produce anything like so perfect a list. The first mention of the Mayor is in the Sneyd Roll, in the Ordinances of 1377, but the name first recorded is that of Nicholas Flaxhall, in 1452. The names of the Mayors are principally preserved in the Burgess Roll, the Town Deeds, and the Registers of the old church.

THE  
CORPORATION.

# LIST OF MAYORS.

1377	First mention of Mayor, but name not given.				
1452	(31 Henry VI.)	...	...	...	NICHOLAS FLAXHALL. JOHN MARCHALL. JOHN COLMAN. RICHARD HOPKYN. ROGER BRASIER
1469	(8 Ed. IV.)	...	...	...	NICHOLAS FLAXHALL.
1476	(16 Ed. IV.) (Henry VII.)	...	...	...	THOMAS BAYLY RICHARD TOYE, JR.
1498	(13 Henry VII.)	...	...	...	THOMAS FLAXALL.
1499	(14 Henry VII.)	...	...	...	ROGER DINGLEY.
1500	(15 Henry VII.)	...	...	...	RICHARD HOPKYN.
1501	(16 Henry VII.)	...	...	...	
1502	(17 Henry VII.)	...	...	...	WILLIAM MARCHALL.
1503	(18 Henry VII.)	...	...	...	RICHARD TOYE.
1504	(19 Henry VII.)	...	...	...	NICHOLAS COLEMAN.
1505	(20 Henry VII.)	...	...	...	
1506	(21 Henry VII.)	...	...	...	ROGER PEMBERTON.
1507	(22 Henry VII.)	...	...	...	WILLIAM MERCHALD.
1508	(23 Henry VII.)	...	...	...	RICHARD TOYE (?).
1509	(24 Henry VII.)	...	...	...	NICHOLAS COLEMAN.
1510	( 1 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	ROGER PEMBERTON.
1511	( 2 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	
1512	( 3 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	ROGER BRASIER.
1513	( 4 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	RICHARD HURST.
1514	( 5 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	WILLIAM TURLE.
1515	( 6 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	WILLIAM HOPKYN.
1516	( 7 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	RICHARD HAYNES.
1517	( 8 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	RICHARD HOPKYN.
1518	( 9 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	ROGER BRASIER.
1519	(10 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	
1520	(11 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	ROGER BRASEWE (?).
1521	(12 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	
1522	(13 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	WILLIAM TURLE.
1523	(14 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	JOHN CLARKSON
1524	(15 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	WILLIAM HOPKYN.
1525	(16 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	JOHN SMYTH
1526	(17 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	ROGER BRASIER.
1527	(18 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	RICHARD HOPKYN.
1528	(19 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	WILLIAM TURLE.
1529	(20 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	RICHARD DINGLEY.
1530	(21 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	JOHN CLERKESON.
1531	(22 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	RICHARD HOPKYN.
1532	(23 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	WILLIAM HOPKYN.

1533	(24 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	WILLIAM TURLE.	Co
1534	(25 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	THOMAS KEMPSON.	
1535	(26 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...		
1536	(27 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	WILLIAM HAWKEN.	
1537	(28 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	RICHARD DINGLEY.	
1538	(29 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	JOHN CLARKESON.	
1539	(30 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	RICHARD HOPKEYS.	
1540	(31 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	JOHN HODGETTS (?).	
1541	(32 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	RICHARD DYNLEY.	
1542	(33 Henry VIII.)	..	...	...	RICHARD HOPK'S.	
1543	(34 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	RICHARD HOPK'S.	
1544	(35 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	WILLIAM HAWKEN.	
1545	(36 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	JOHN HOGGETTS.	
1546	(37 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	RICHARD HOPKIN.	
1547	(38 Henry VIII.)	...	...	...	RICHARD DINGLEY.	
1548	(1 Ed. VI.)	...	...	...	JOHN STONE.	
1549	(2 Ed. VI.)	...	...	...	RICHARD HOPKYN'S.	
1550	(3 Ed. VI.)	...	...	...	WILLIAM ALPORT.	
1551	(4 Ed. VI.)	...	...	...	ROBERT BLACKBORNE.	
1552	(5 Ed. VI.)	...	...	...	JAMES DUCIE.	
1553	(6 Ed. VI.)	...	...	...	JOHN HODGETTS.	
1554	(7 Ed. VI. and 1 Mary)	...	...	...	JOHN STONE.	
1555	(2 Mary)	...	...	...	THOMAS SPENSER.	
1556	(3 Mary)	...	...	...	JOHN TURNER, Vicar.	
1557	(4 Mary)	...	...	...	JOHN DAWSON.	
1558	(5 Mary)	...	...	...	JAMES DWICIE.	
1559	(1 Eliz.)	...	...	...	WILLIAM GORTWAYE.	
1560	(2 Eliz.)	...	...	...	GEORGE MARTYN.	
1561	(3 Eliz.)	...	...	...	JOHN LYDDEAT.	
1562	(4 Eliz.)	...	...	...	JOHN HOGGETTES. (ROBERT BLACKBURN, Deputy.)	
1563	(5 Eliz.)	...	...	...	JOHN STONE.	
1564	(6 Eliz.)	...	...	...	WILLIAM BALL.	
1565	(7 Eliz.)	...	...	...	JOHN LANT.	
1566	(8 Eliz.)	...	...	...	RICHARD WORTHINGTON.	
1567	(9 Eliz.)	..	...	...	JOHN STONE.	
1568	(10 Eliz.)	...	...	...	WILLIAM GORWAY.	
1569	(11 Eliz.)	...	...	...	JOHN LYDYAT.	
1570	(12 Eliz.)	...	...	...	JAMES DUCE.	
1571	(13 Eliz.)	...	...	...	JOHN CURTES.	
1572	(14 Eliz.)	...	...	...	JOHN STONE.	
1573	(15 Eliz.)	...	...	...	NICHOLAS STONE.	
1574	(16 Eliz.)	...	...	...	ROBERT BLACKBURN.	
1575	(17 Eliz.)	...	..	...	WILLIAM BALL.	
1576	(18 Eliz.)	...	...	...	THOMAS WEBB.	
1577	(19 Eliz.)	...	...	...	RICHARD WEBB.	
1578	(20 Eliz.)	...	...	...	CRYNTOFER ADAMSON.	
1579	(21 Eliz.)	...	...	...	THOMAS GORWEY.	

THE CORPORATION. —	1580	(22 Eliz.)	...	...	...	...	WILLIAM GORWEY.
	1581	(23 Eliz.)	...	...	...	...	JOHN HODGKINSON.
	1582	(24 Eliz.)	...	...	...	...	THOMAS WEBB.
	1583	(25 Eliz.)	...	..	...	...	WILLIAM WEBB.
	1584	(26 Eliz.)	...	...	...	...	CHRISTOPHER ADAMSON.
	1585	(27 Eliz.)	...	...	...	...	JOHN STONE ON THE HILL.
	1586	(28 Eliz.)	...	...	...	...	HUGH LIDDIATT.
	1587	(29 Eliz.)	...	...	...	...	THOMAS STONE.
	1588	(30 Eliz.)	...	...	...	...	WILLIAM JERNE.
	1589	(31 Eliz.)	...	..	...	...	THOMAS GREENE.
	1590	(32 Eliz.)	..	...	...	...	GEORGE HAWK.
	1591	(33 Eliz.)	...	...	...	...	EDMUND WHEATE.
	1592	(34 Eliz.)	...	...	...	...	EDMUND PIERSON.
	1593	(35 Eliz.)	...	...	...	...	JOHN LIDDIATT.
	1594	(36 Eliz.)	...	...	...	...	HENRY STONE.
	1595	(37 Eliz.)	...	...	...	...	THOMAS GORWEY.
	1596	(38 Eliz.)	...	...	...	...	THOMAS WEBB.
	1597	(39 Eliz.)	...	...	...	...	GEORGE HAWK.
	1598	(40 Eliz.)	...	...	...	...	WILLIAM LYCETT.
	1599	(41 Eliz.)	...	...	...	...	WILLIAM WEBB.
	1600	(42 Eliz.)	...	...	...	...	NICHOLAS SHEPPARD.
	1601	(43 Eliz.)	...	...	...	...	RICHARD DUCIE.
	1602	(44 Eliz.)	...	...	...	...	JOHN BOULTON.
	1603	(45 Eliz.)	...	...	...	...	JOHN CURTEYSE.
	1604	(1 Jas.)	...	...	...	...	THOMAS GORWAY, SENIOR.
	1605	(2 Jas.)	...	...	...	...	HENRY STONE.
	1606	(3 Jas.)	...	...	...	...	RICHARD ADDAMSON.
	1607	(4 Jas.)	...	...	...	...	THOMAS GORWAY.
	1608	(5 Jas.)	...	...	...	...	THOMAS BALL.
	1609	(6 Jas.)	...	..	...	...	JOHN LYDDIAT.
	1610	(7 Jas.)	...	...	...	...	WILLIAM TAYLOR.
	1611	(8 Jas.)	...	...	...	...	RICHARD DUCIE.
	1612	(9 Jas.)	...	...	...	...	WILLIAM PEARSON.
	1613	(10 Jas.)	...	...	...	...	
	1614	(11 Jas.)	...	...	...	...	WILLIAM WEBB.
	1615	(12 Jas.)	...	...	...	...	
	1616	(13 Jas.)	..	...	...	...	THOMAS GORWAY.
	1617	(14 Jas.)	...	...	...	...	RICHARD ADAMSON.
	1618	(15 Jas.)	..	...	...	...	ROGER COMBERLEGE.
	1619	(16 Jas.)	...	...	...	{	WILLIAM PEARSON (?)
							NICHOLAS SHEPPARD.
	1620	(17 Jas.)	...	...	...	{	MR. SEELEY.
							THOMAS HANCOXE.
	1621	(18 Jas.)	..	..	...	...	NICHOLAS SHEPPARD.
	1622	(19 Jas.)	...	..	...	...	
	1623	(20 Jas.)	...	...	...	...	
	1624	(21 Jas. I.)	..	...	...	...	
	1625	(22 Jas. I. and 1 Chas. I.)...	...	...	...	...	RICHARD ADAMSON

1626	(2 Chas. I.) ...	...	...	...		
1627	(3 Chas. I.) ...	...	...	...	WILLIAM WERR.	THE CORPORATION.
1628	(4 Chas. I.) ...	...	...	...		—
1629	(5 Chas. I.) ...	...	...	...	HENRY STONE.	
1630	(6 Chas. I.) ...	...	...	...		
1631	(7 Chas. I.) ...	...	...	...		
1632	(8 Chas. I.) ...	...	...	...		
1633	(9 Chas. I.) ...	...	...	...		
1634	(10 Chas. I.) ...	...	...	...	HENRY SHEPPARD.	
1635	(11 Chas. I.) ...	...	...	...		
1636	(12 Chas. I.) ...	...	...	...	THOMAS WOLLASTON.	
1637	(13 Chas. I.) ...	...	...	...	THOMAS WOLLASTON.	
1638	(14 Chas. I.) ...	...	...	...		
1639	(15 Chas. I.) ...	...	...	...		
1640	(16 Chas. I.) ...	...	...	...		
1641	(17 Chas. I.) ...	...	...	...		
1642	(18 Chas. I.) ...	...	...	...		
1643	(19 Chas. I.) ...	...	...	...		
1644	(20 Chas. I.) ...	...	...	...	WILLIAM ADDERSICH.	
1645	(21 Chas. I.) ...	...	...	...		
1646	(22 Chas. I.) ...	...	...	...	WILLIAM ADDERSICH.	
1647	(23 Chas. I.) ...	...	...	...		
1648	(24 Chas. I.) ...	...	...	...	JOHN SHOTWELL.	
1649	(1 Chas. II.) ...	...	...	...	THOMAS RICHARDS.	
1650	(2 Chas. II.) ...	...	...	...		
1651	(3 Chas. II.) ...	...	...	...		
1652	(4 Chas. II.) ...	...	...	...		
1653	(5 Chas. II.) ...	...	...	...		
1654	(6 Chas. II.) ...	...	...	...		
1655	(7 Chas. II.) ...	...	...	...	WILLIAM SMITH.	
1656	(8 Chas. II.) ...	...	...	...		
1657	(9 Chas. II.) ...	...	...	...		
1658	(10 Chas. II.) ...	...	...	...		
1659	(11 Chas. II.) ...	...	...	...		
1660	(12 Chas. II.) ...	...	...	...		
1661	(13 Chas. II.) ...	...	...	...	JOHN WOLLASTON.	
1662	(14 Chas. II.) ...	...	...	...		
1663	(15 Chas. II.) ...	...	...	...		
1664	(16 Chas. II.) ...	...	...	...	RICHARD BLACKHAM.	
1665	(17 Chas. II.) ...	...	...	...	RICHARD BLACKHAM.	
1666	(18 Chas. II.) ...	...	...	...		
1667	(19 Chas. II.) ...	...	...	...		
1668	(20 Chas. II.) ...	...	...	...		
1669	(21 Chas. II.) ...	...	...	...	RICHARD BURTON.	
1670	(22 Chas. II.) ...	...	...	...		
1671	(23 Chas. II.) ...	...	...	...		
1672	(24 Chas. II.) ...	...	...	...		
1673	(25 Chas. II.) ...	...	...	...		

THE CORPORATION. —	1674	(26 Chas. II.)	...	...	...	
	1675	(27 Chas. II.)	...	..	...	
	1676	(28 Chas. II.)	...	...	...	
	1677	(29 Chas. II.)	...	...	...	
	1678	(30 Chas. II.)	..	...	...	JOHN BLACKHAM.
	1679	(31 Chas. II.)	...	...	...	WILLIAM HADDERSYCH.
	1680	(32 Chas. II.)	...	...	...	JOHN CUMBERLEGE.
	1681	(33 Chas. II.)	...	...	...	
	1682	(34 Chas. II.)	...	...	...	
	1683	(35 Chas. II.)	...	...	...	
	1684	(36 Chas. II.)	...	...	...	
	1685	(37 Chas. II. and 1 Jas. II.)	...			
	1686	(2 Jas. II.)	...	...	...	
	1687	(3 Jas. II.)	..	...	...	
	1688	(4 Jas. II.)	...	...	...	JOHN CUMBERLEGE.
	1689	(1 Wm. and Mary)	...	...	...	THOMAS ROPER.
	1690	(2 Wm. and Mary)	...	...	...	GEORGE FFWLER.
	1691	(3 Wm. and Mary)	...	...	...	JOHN PERKS.
	1692	...	...	...	...	WILLIAM SENEY.
	1693	...	...	...	...	SIMON BIBB.
	1694	...	...	...	...	WILLIAM MOUSLEY.
	1695	...	...	...	...	JOHN PERKS.
	1696	...	...	...	...	JOSIAH SARTIN.
	1697	...	...	...	...	JOSIAH CURTIS, Maltster.
	1698	...	...	...	...	GEORGE TURNPENNY.
	1699	...	...	...	...	JOHN BLACKHAM
	1700	...	...	...	...	ROGER WALKER.
	1701	...	...	...	...	MARTIN PASHBY.
	1702	...	...	...	...	THOMAS WILSON, Ironmonger.
	1703	...	...	...	...	THOMAS ROPER.
	1704	...	...	...	...	WILLIAM SENEY, Ironmonger.
	1705	...	...	...	...	THOMAS HODGKINSON.
	1706	...	...	...	...	SIMON BIBB.
	1707	...	...	...	...	EDWARD BALL.
	1708	...	...	...	...	MOUNTFORT CLARKSON, Bucklemaker
	1709	...	...	...	...	GEORGE HAZLEWOOD.
	1710	...	...	...	...	CHARLES TURNPENNY.
	1711	...	...	...	...	WILLIAM PEARSON.
	1712	...	...	...	...	EDWARD SMITH.
	1713	...	...	...	...	JOSIAH CURTIS.
	1714	...	...	...	...	JOSEPH WILSON.
	1715	...	...	...	...	SAMUEL WILSON, Maltster.
	1716	...	...	...	...	THOMAS WILSON.
	1717	...	...	...	...	RICHARD BURROWES, Maltster.

1718	GEORGE HAZLEWOOD.	1759	SAMUEL SHORT.	
1719	EDWARD BALL.	1760	JOHN WILSON.	Col
1720	RICHARD SAUNDERS.	1761	JOHN BRADNOCK.	
1721	SIMON BIBB, Senior.	1762	RICHARD PALMER.	
1722	MR. HOLLIS.	1763	THOMAS HUXLEY.	
1723	JOHN BLACKHAM, Junior, Baker.	1764	JOHN BRADNOCK.	
1724	MR. CURTIS, Junior.	1765	RICHARD PALMER.	
1725	JOHN COX.	1766	JOHN TAYLOR.	
1726	G. ETHERIDGE, Innholder.	1767	REV. ROBERT FELTON, Vicar.	
1727	JOHN COX, Clothier.	1768	THOMAS HUXLEY.	
1728	MARTIN PASHLEY, Chandler.	1769	JOHN TAYLOR.	
1729	RICHARD BURROWES, Maltster.	1770	JOHN BRADNOCK.	
1730	JOHN BLACKHAM, Maltster.	1771	RICHARD PALMER.	
1731	JOHN BLACKHAM.	1772	JOHN TAYLOR.	
1732	WM. PERSEHOUSE, Esq.	1773	JOHN STUBBS.	
1733	SAMUEL CRADDOCK, Chapman.	1774	JOSEPH SPURRIER.	
1734	RICHARD HOLLIS.	1775	THOMAS FARMER.	
1735		1776	EDWARD HOLMS.	
1736	SAMUEL SHORT.	1777	JOHN SMITH.	
1737		1778	WILLIAM ELWELL, Junior	
1738		1779	STEPHEN BARBER.	
1739		1780	JOHN FARMER.	
1740	THOMAS BRADNOCK.	1781	JOHN PALMER.	
1741	SAMUEL CORBETT.	1782	CHARLES FORSTER.	
1742	MARTIN PASHLEY, Grocer.	1783	JOHN STUBBS.	
1743	WILLIAM HAZLEWOOD, Chandler.	1784	REV. JNO. SIMPSON RUTTER, Vicar.	
1744	CHARLES STEWARD.	1785	BENJAMIN MOLD.	
1745	THOMAS NICHOLLS.	1786	CHARLES WINDLE.	
1746	THOMAS BRADNOCK.	1787	WILLIAM ELWELL, Junior.	
1747	SAMUEL CORBETT.	1788	JOHN STUBBS.	
1748	CHARLES STEWARD.	1789	WILLIAM KENDRICK.	
1749	JOSEPH SPURRIER, Maltster.	1790	THOMAS FARMER.	
1750	JOHN COULSON	1791	REV. JOHN S. RUTTER.	
1751	SAMUEL CORBETT, Baker.	1792	JAMES ADAMS.	
1752	THOMAS NICHOLLS.	1793	WILLIAM ADAMS.	
1753	SAMUEL CORBETT.	1794	DEYKIN HEMMING.	
1754	CHARLES STEWARD.	1795	WILLIAM HIPKINS.	
1755	SAMUEL SHORT.	1796	THOMAS OLDHAM CHINNER.	
1756	{ THOMAS BRADNOCK. JOHN WILSON.	1797	RICHARD ADAMS.	
1757	SAMUEL SHORT.	1798	WILLIAM ADAMS.	
1758	JOHN WILSON.	1799	JOHN STUBBS.	
		1800	CHARLES FORSTER.	
		1801	JAMES ADAMS.	
		1802	WALTER SPURRIER.	
		1803	CHARLES ADAMS.	
		1804	JOHN STUBBS.	
		1805	RICHARD ADAMS.	



THE CORPORATION.	1806	JAMES ADAMS.	1846	FREDERICK THURSTAN.
	1807	WALTER SPURRIER.	1847	" "
—	1808	JOSEPH CURTIS.	1848	SAMUEL STEPHENS.
	1809	THOMAS SCOTT.	1849	WILLIAM HARRISON.
	1810	WILLIAM WALTON.	1850	JOHN SHANNON.
	1811	SAMUEL WILSON.	1851	HENRY HIGHWAY.
	1812	JAMES ADAMS.	1852	SAMUEL LOWE.
	1813	SAMUEL SHARRATT.	1853	" "
	1814	CHAS. HENRY DARWALL.	1854	FRANCIS B. OERTON.
	1815	JOHN WOOD.	1855	" "
	1816	SAMUEL FLETCHER.	1856	WILLIAM THOMAS.
	1817	JOHN ADAMS.	1857	CHARLES EYLAND.
	1818	CHAS. SMITH FORSTER.	1858	" "
	1819	CHARLES WINDLE.	1859	JOSEPH DAY.
	1820	WILLIAM MARSHALL.	1860	HENRY BRACE.
	1821	JOHN FORSTER.	1861	" "
	1822	RICHARD RUTTER.	1862	SAMUEL COX.
	1823	HY. CHRISTOPHER WINDLE.	1863	" "
	1824	SAMUEL FLETCHER.	1864	THOMAS HAZLEDINE.
	1825	CHAS. HENRY DARWALL.	1865	JOHN BREWER, Junior.
	1826	JOHN HEELEY.	1866	" "
	1827	RICHARD RUTTER.	1867	JOHN HILDICK.
	1828	CHAS. SMITH FORSTER.	1868	" "
	1829	SAMUEL SHERRATT.	1869	WILLIAM H. DUIGNAN.
	1830	JOHN HEELEY	1870	EDWARD T. HOLDEN.
	1831	THOMAS DICKENSON.	1871	" "
	1832	JAMES RUSSELL.	1872	R. W. BROWNHILL.
	1833	CHARLES WINDLE.	1873	" "
	1834	CHAS. FORSTER COTTERILL.	1874	THOMAS CHECKLEY.
	1835	" " "	1875	" "
	1836	{ RICHARD JAMES.	1876	WILLIAM BAYLISS.
		{ JOSEPH COWLEY.	1877	" "
	1837	JOSEPH COWLEY.	1878	GEORGE THOMAS.
	1838	WILLIAM DIXON.	1879	" "
	1839	JOHN WHITGREAVE.	1880	JOSEPH NEWMAN.
	1840	" "	1881	" "
	1841	THOMAS OERTON.	1882	BENJAMIN BEEBEE.
	1842	ARTHUR ADAMS.	1883	JOSEPH HOWES SMITH.
	1843	HOWARD FLETCHER.	1884	GEORGE WILLIAMS.
	1844	JOHN HYATT HARVEY.	1885	THOMAS EVANS.
	1845	HENRY BOX.	1886	WILLIAM KIRKPATRICK.

## THE FREE GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

The origin of this noble and flourishing institution is to be found in the dissolution of the small chantries, which had escaped the avaricious tyranny of Henry VIII. On the accession of Edward VI. in 1547, a Statute was enacted for making over to the Crown all the chantries, colleges, and free chapels throughout the kingdom, that yet remained undissolved. Among these were the Chantries of St. Matthew's, and the Guilds of St. John the Baptist, and Our Lady. In order to appease the scruples of those who objected to this scheme, assurance was given that the lands in question, and more especially those of the Guilds, should be afterwards restored. The professed objects of this confiscation were the discouragement of superstition; the conversion of the funds obtained by the suppression of the chantries "to good and godly Uses, as in erecting of Grammar Schools to the Education of Youth in Vertue and Godliness; the further Augmenting of the Universities and better Provision for the Poor and Needy." So far as Walsall and many other places were concerned, this pretext proved a mere delusion. John Dudley, the then Lord of the Manor, was created Earl of Warwick, and afterwards Duke of Northumberland, and managed to become possessed not only of the rectory and church tithes, but also of

*Statutes of  
Edward VI.*

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1554.

the chantry lands, together with those belonging to the Collegiate Church of Wolverhampton. This John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland and Lord of the Manor of Walsall, was beheaded on 22nd August, 1553, declaring that "he died in the Catholic faith, and that the country would never enjoy peace till it returned to the old religion." His estates were confiscated to the Crown, and the inhabitants of Walsall now seem to have been aroused to the importance of securing the chantry lands for the benefit of the town, and seized this opportunity of doing so. A petition was presented to the Crown by two influential citizens, Nicholas Hawe and George Hawe, and through their exertions a Letter Patent, under the Great Seal of England, dated 2nd July in the 1st year of the reign of Queen Mary (1554), was granted.

But little record of these two worthy men is left. They are described in the Letter Patent as Gentlemen. George Hawe lived at Caldmore, probably in the old mansion house, still in existence there, known as the "White Hart," and now desecrated by being used as a public house. This house was undoubtedly the property of the Hawe family. The will of George Hawe is dated October 27th, 1557, and bequeaths to Harper's Almshouses in Dudley Street a close at Walsall Town's End of the yearly value of 26s. 8d. This close includes the vacant land in Marsh Street belonging to Mr. Alfred Bullows, as well as the site of the canal, and an annual rent is still paid for it to the Almshouses. The names of George and Nicholas Hawe are also mentioned in the Calendar of Deeds.

The Letter Patent of Queen Mary bears the date of July 2nd, 1554 (1 Mary), and was granted upon the humble petition of George Hawe and Nicholas Hawe, of Walsall, on behalf of the inhabitants of the town and parish of Walsall, for the constituting a Grammar School in Walsall for the erudition and instruction of boys and youths, to be called "The

Free Grammar School of Queen Mary at Walsall," consisting of one schoolmaster or pedagogue, and one usher or sub-pedagogue, and it was ordained that ten men of the more discreet and honest inhabitants of the town and parish of Walsall should be called governors of the school, and George Hawe, Nicholas Hawe, and eight others were appointed first governors to act as a body corporate, and have power to hold lands, &c. By the same Letter Patent the Queen granted to the governors lands in Woodend, Tipton, Bloxwich, Walsall, Norton and Caldmore, Harden and Shelfield, in the parish of Walsall, which are stated to have extended to the clear annual value of £10, and which had lately been parcel of the possessions of certain chantries therein mentioned. The total extent of these lands amounted, according to a survey taken in 1819, to nearly 300 acres. The governors were to use a common seal, to sue and be sued, to elect the master and usher, and, with the advice of the Bishop of the Diocese, to make statutes for the government of the school. Power was also given to expel any governor, who should break the ordinances and statutes so made, and to appoint another in his stead.

In 1797, an Act of Parliament was obtained for enabling the governors to sell certain mines (which had then lately been discovered) under part of their lands, and to sell and exchange certain other lands for the purpose of extending the benefits of the school. The coal under the land at Tipton was sold in 1800 by the governors for a term of 42 years, at £505 per acre, producing altogether the sum of £12,243 ls. 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>d. This, with some other portion of the school funds, was paid over to the Court of Chancery, to be invested for the future extension of the charity. The Act also enlarged the trust and powers of the said governors, and enabled them to build a chapel, the minister thereof being the Head Master of the Grammar School; to establish as many schoolhouses and

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schoolrooms in convenient situations in the parish as they should think necessary, and to direct how many boys and girls should be admitted into the schools, what they should be taught, and how many should be maintained, clothed, supported, and put out apprentices or to service; to appoint so many masters and mistresses from time to time, to teach boys and girls of the parish of Walsall in reading, writing, knitting, sewing, arithmetic, geography, &c., with a proviso that there should always be one head master and one usher to teach the children and youth in grammar and classical learning, in conformity with the Letter Patent of Queen Mary. The head master was to be a clergyman of the Church of England, in priest's orders, and a graduate of one of the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, or Dublin. In addition to his school salary an annual stipend of £50 was to be paid to him as minister of the chapel, &c. The Act provided, moreover, that both masters and governors should be members of the Church of England.

In 1813 an investigation into the accounts of the school took place, owing to the unsatisfactory state into which they had fallen. It was found that a balance of £1,000 was due from the treasurer, a Mr. Wilson. For this he gave a bond to the governors, the whole of which, except £350, was paid off after his death; but this discovery led to the dismissal of Mr. Wilson, who died soon after, in great poverty. The funds of the school at this time, standing in the name of the Accountant General, amounted to £11,854 8s. 11d., three per cent. consols. The stock was kept down by large sums expended from time to time by order of the court, for various purposes of the charity. Thus, on December 18th, 1800, a sum of £992 2s. 5d. was paid (1st) for discharging a mortgage of £600, borrowed in order to defray the expenses of the Act of 1797; (2nd) for paying the auction duty on the sale of the mines, £306 1s. 6d.; (3rd) for the redemption of the Land Tax, £86 0s. 11d.

On August 10th, 1813, a sum of £2,750 was directed to be paid for the purchase of a house, warehouse, and other buildings, situated in Park Street, with a garden attached, to be converted into two schools and schoolhouses, for the two masters, and a sum of £465, then in hand, and as much more as should be necessary, to be raised by sale of stock, was ordered to be paid for costs and expenses. Up to this time the Grammar School had stood on the church hill, in St. Matthew's churchyard. It was a long, narrow, low-roofed building, affording accommodation for 66 boys. The premises in Park Street, now acquired, were converted into two schoolrooms and two houses, at a total cost of £3,690, and the Grammar School was, until the year 1847, conducted there. The old schoolhouse was turned into a Commercial School, with 84 boys, and conducted on the National plan.

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1813-1821.

In 1817 a sum of £940 16s. 2d. was paid for alterations on the school premises. The following year £919 0s. 0d. was paid to Lord Bradford and Mr. Joseph Stubbs, for land for the purpose of erecting a chapel, and in 1822 it was ordered that £263 18s. 0d. should be paid to the trustees, to defray a balance due from them in the current expenditure.

Although the Act of 1797 had provided that a chapel should be built in connection with and out of the funds of the school, nothing had been done. In August, 1821, a petition was presented to the governors from the inhabitants of Walsall Wood, in which they state "that little was heard there except what was occasionally dealt out by the itinerant Methodist," and begging the governors, "as men, as Christians, as members of the Established Church, to take their state into consideration." The governors replied that they were quite willing to grant the petition, but had no power to build out of the town. The petition was afterwards presented to the Lord Chancellor, but without effect. The

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1813-1823.

inhabitants of Walsall Wood were, however, not to be daunted. The Sunday School, which was held at the "Horse and Jockey," was removed in 1825 to a new and more commodious schoolroom; and in 1836 they commenced the building of a church, which was duly consecrated on August 20th, 1837.

The Chapel of St. Paul, in consequence of some dispute between the Vicar of Walsall and the Governors, was not erected until the year 1826. The land, on part of which the chapel was built, consisting of 2 acres 1 rood 26 poles, cost £919, the larger portion of it costing 3s. per square yard. The estimate for the chapel itself amounted to £2,245, exclusive of the vestry and chancel, which were not added until 1852.

The following Head Masters of the Grammar School were Ministers of St. Paul's:

1826	..	..	THE REV. THOMAS ROGERS, M.A.
1837	...	...	THE REV. CHARLES F. CHILDE, M.A. In 1839 Principal of the Church Missionary College, Islington.
1841	...	...	THE REV. WM. GIBBS BARKER, M.A.
1844	...	...	THE REV. JOHN MOULD, M.A. Vicar of Oakham.
1845	...	...	THE REV. JOHN BALDWIN PUGH, M.A. Vicar of Hemel Hempstead, Herts.
1858	...	...	THE REV. A. C. IRVINE, M.A. Vicar of St. Mary's, Warwick.

Griffiths, p. 358.

Returning once more to the school, we find that in 1813 the revenue amounted to £397 9s. 6d., and the expenses to £476 8s. 8d., leaving a deficiency of nearly £80, which afterwards was in some degree lessened by some retrenchments and a small increase in the rental.

Ibid, 357.

In 1823 the income was £778 3s. 0d., consisting of rents £418 12s. 0d. and dividends £359 11s. 0d., in addition to which the trustees received the following sums for timber sold off their estates: In 1805, £10; in 1806, £40; in 1813, £274 10s. 0d.; and in 1814, £134 10s. 0d.

The following are given as the principal salaries for the officers of the school about the year 1838:

	£	s.	d.
Head Master, including stipend as Minister of St. Paul's	220	0	0
Usher .. .. .	100	0	0
Writing Master to the Grammar School .. .	60	0	0
Master of the English School .. .	80	0	0

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1838-1855.  
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A small branch school, for the education of 20 children, was also established by the governors at Walsall Wood, and salaries paid to two school-mistresses.

The freedom of these schools extended to the whole parish, and boys over eight were admitted, provided they were able to read and write. They were required to provide their own books, and to attend Divine Service at St. Paul's every Sunday.

In 1837 the system of the school was re-modelled by the governors, acting under the advice of the Rev. C. F. Childe, the then head master. The foundation was divided into two parts—the Grammar School and the Commercial School. The numbers admitted to the benefits of the foundation were, 60 in the former, and 40 in the latter school. In 1854 they were respectively 50 and 84. The total number of scholars is now (1887) 103 in the High School and 81 in the Lower School, of whom 20 in all are on the Foundation.

In 1847 the South Staffordshire Railway Company bought the school premises in Park Street, and with this money the governors purchased a piece of land in Lichfield Street, and erected the present school buildings, while the old premises in St. Matthew's churchyard were exchanged with Lord Hatherton.

On July 4th, 1854, the tercentenary of the foundation of the Institution was held with great public celebrations. A short account of the school was published at this time, from the pen of Mr. Pugh, the then head master.

At a public enquiry, held in 1855, the income of the school was stated to be £873, while the following sums in Stock belonged to the charity:



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SCHOOL.  
1855-1873.

£3,363 10s. 5d., and £2,979, part of which arose from the sale of mines at the Birchills, and part from the surface. At this time the benefits of the school were practically limited to the children of members of the Church of England, and a long discussion arose upon this subject, which, however, led to no different result.

In 1869 the "Endowed Schools Act" was passed, and the Education Commissioners entirely re-modelled the school, the new scheme of which came into operation on May 14th, 1872. By this scheme the governing body consists of thirteen, of whom nine are representative governors. Of these nine, six are elected by the Town Council, and three by the School Board of Walsall. The other four are co-opted by the nine. The representative governors hold office for a term of five years, and are then re-eligible. The four co-optative governors are appointed for a term of ten years. The schools are now called Queen Mary's Schools, and comprise a High School for boys, between the ages of eight and eighteen, and a Lower School for boys, from seven to fifteen years, for the convenience of which latter a new schoolroom, with a porter's lodge, have been built in Forster Street.

The staff of masters in both schools has been increased, and fees have been imposed to meet the insufficiency of funds. The fees now amount to £5 per annum for the High School, and £3 4s. 0d. for the Lower School, while the staff consists of a head master in each school, with five assistant and five visiting masters. The head master for the future need not hold holy orders.

By the Scheme of 1872, St. Paul's Chapel was severed from the school, and constituted an independent church, the funds of the school receiving in compensation the sum of £1,000, raised by the congregation and friends. By this separation, full religious liberty was thus secured to the scholars, who, in 1873, were freed from attending St. Paul's Chapel. This rule had been for many years a bone

of contention, not only with nonconformists, but with churchmen themselves. The scheme likewise provided for a yearly balance sheet being published, and also that ladies might be eligible for a seat on the governing body.

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The early records of the school are very scanty, and confined to the names of a few of the masters, and the renown acquired by at least two of its scholars. As before stated, the school originally stood in St. Matthew's churchyard, within a few yards of the church itself, occupying it has been thought the "site of the building belonging to the brethren of the Gild of St. John the Baptist, with whose estates it was endowed." There is, however, nothing but conjecture to support this view.

Walsall Obser-  
ver, 1862,  
p. 225.

The following list of masters is incomplete, while it is possible that during the Civil Wars, many records of the school perished along with those other documents of the town, which we know disappeared at that time.

## LIST OF MASTERS.

### HEAD MASTERS.

REV. JOHN BROWN	...	...	...	...	Elected Jan. 1592.
REV. JOHN FOY	...	...	...	...	.. 1650.
REV. N. BARFOOT	...	...	...	...	.. 1664.
REV. JOHN (?) WHITTINGHAM	...	...	...	...	.. 1666.
REV. N. NICKINS...	...	...	...	...	.. 1704.
REV. J. CHILLINGWORTH	...	...	...	...	.. 1728.

His name occurs in the Church Register for 1730.

REV. JOHN BOYCOTT	...	...	...	...	Elected March 25th, 1740.
REV. THOMAS COX, A.M.	...	...	...	...	.. 1744.

He was Vicar of Shenstone in 1744, but gave that living up in 1750 for the living of Dunton Bassett, in Leicestershire.

Hist. of Shen-  
stone, p. 11.

REV. CHARLES BLACKHAM	...	...	...	...	Elected Oct. 31st, 1776.
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Mr. Blackham had previously been Second Master. He retained the Head Mastership for thirty-four years, took great interest in the school, and in 1790 was the means of adding a third or writing master to the staff.

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SCHOOL.

THE REV. THOMAS HARWOOD ... ..	Elected Aug. 4th, 1810.
THE REV. T. R. GLEADOW ... ..	„ April 26th. 1811.
THE REV. THOMAS ROGERS, M.A. ... ..	„ 1826.
THE REV. CHARLES F. CHILDE, M.A. ... ..	„ April 22nd, 1837.
In 1830 Principal of the Church Missionary College at Islington.	
THE REV. WILLIAM GIBBS BARKER, M.A. ... ..	Elected March 10th, 1839.
St. John's College, Cambridge. He was Principal of the Missionary Home.	
THE REV. JOHN MOULD, M.A.... ..	Elected Jan. 5th, 1844.
He graduated at St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1838. After leaving Walsall he was Master of Appleby Grammar School, Vicar of Tamworth in 1854 and of Oakham in 1865.	
THE REV. JAMES BALDWIN PUGH, M.A. .. ..	Elected Jan. 4th, 1845.
He also graduated at St. John's College, Cambridge. In his time the Tercentenary was celebrated. He resigned in 1858. He was afterwards Vicar of Hemel Hempstead, and died near Rugby in 1885.	
THE REV. A. C. IRVINE, M.A.... ..	Elected 1858.
Balliol College, Oxford. Appointed Vicar of St. Mary's, Warwick, 1861.	
JAMES A. ALDIS, Esq., M.A. ... ..	Elected 1881.
Trinity College, Cambridge.	

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#### SECOND MASTERS.

M <sup>r</sup> . GEORGE CLARKSON ... ..	Elected 1650.
MR. COX ... ..	—
REV. J. SLATER ... ..	„ 1704.
MR. EDWARD SHAW ... ..	„ Dec. 31st, 1740.
REV. WILLIAM WOOD ... ..	—
REV. CHARLES BLACKHAM ... ..	„ June 24th, 1768.
Afterwards Head Master.	
REV. H. BROWNELL ... ..	Elected Dec. 3rd, 1776.
THE REV. WM. COWLEY... ..	—
He afterwards became Vicar of Rushall.	
MR. JOSIAH ROCK ... ..	Elected Dec. 11th, 1837.
He afterwards went to Solihull.	
REV. THOMAS HUTTON, B.A. ... ..	Elected 1840.
Trinity College, Dublin. He became Chaplain of the Northampton County Gaol.	
MR. THOMAS CONROY .. ..	Elected Oct., 1845.
He was previously Master of the Commercial School.	

REV. ROBERT H. CHARTERS, B.A. ... ..	Elected 1856.
St. John's College, Cambridge.	
REV. F. K. CLARKE, M.A. ... ..	Elected 1858.
Clare College, Cambridge.	
THE REV. J. ROWE, M.A. ... ..	Elected 1860.
Trinity College, Cambridge.	
THE REV. C. U. BOWER, B.A.... ..	Elected 1864.
St. John's College, Cambridge.	
THE REV. W. S. BAMBER, B.A. ... ..	Elected 1870.
Trinity College, Cambridge.	
THE REV. R. K. VINTER, M.A. ... ..	Elected 1873.
St. John's College, Cambridge.	
A. O. SWAFFIELD, Esq., B.A. ... ..	Elected 1877.
Trinity Hall, Cambridge.	
JAMES A. ALDIS, Esq., M.A. ... ..	Elected 1879.
Trinity College, Cambridge.	
WALTER NEW, Esq., B.A. ... ..	Elected 1881.
St. Peter's College, Cambridge.	

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### THIRD, OR WRITING MASTERS.

The writing master was considered as a third master in the Grammar School until the year 1848, in which year the Commercial School was enlarged, and the writing master was appointed as a second Commercial master.

MR. JOSHUA WIGLEY ... ..	Elected March, 1789.
MR. THOMAS FAIRBANKS ... ..	" 1790.
MR. JOHN DUIGNAN .. ...	" Sept., 1796.
MR. WM. HAYWOOD .. ...	" Dec., 1837.
MR. J. LOCKER ... ..	" March, 1840.
MR. BASSETT SMITH ... ..	" Sept., 1840.
MR. S. F. BLOWER ... ..	" March, 1848.
MR. HENRY HALL .. ...	" Dec., 1851.

The present Lower School originated in 1793, when the governors, at the weekly rate of 3d. for each pupil, appointed Mr. Stephen Bloxwich to teach a number of children the rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic, as a preparatory education to that of the Grammar School itself. He was succeeded by

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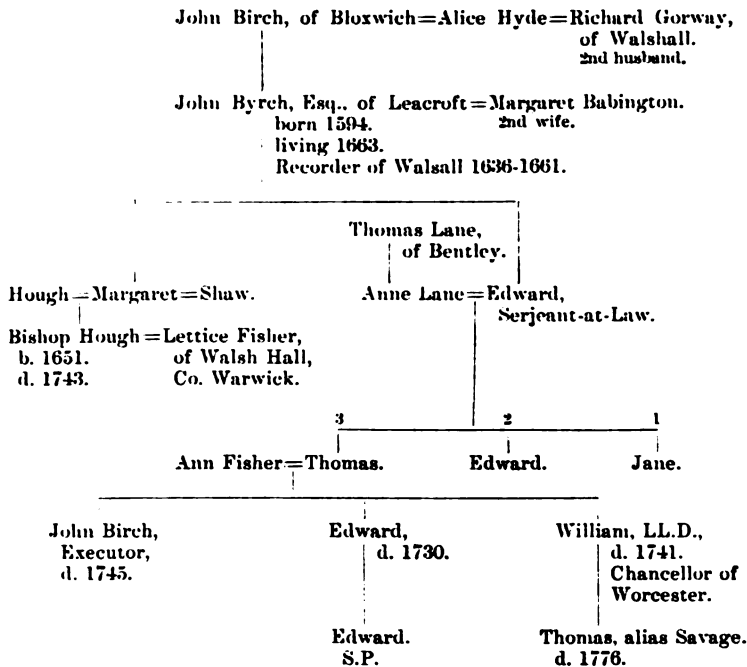
Thomas Oerton, Thomas Adam Tonks, and Thomas Mason. The Commercial School was established in 1837, and Mr. Thomas Conroy was appointed first master; Mr. Thomas Hughes, 1846; Mr. Henry Hall, 1857; Mr. Joshua Vaughan, 1860. In 1848, Mr. Bassett Smith became second Commercial master instead of third master of the Grammar School.

Wilmot, "Life  
of Bishop  
Hough."

The school has numbered among its pupils many who have risen to positions of eminence in the Church, the Bar, and other learned professions, and is able to boast of two scholars of rank, viz., Bishop Hough and Lord Somers. The former was an eminent prelate in the time of James II., and is remarkable for the determined opposition he showed that monarch, when he wished, in 1687, to appoint a Roman Catholic as President of Magdalen College, Oxford. His father was a citizen of London, previously to which he had long been seated in Birmingham. His mother was the daughter of John Byrch, Esq., of Leacroft, near Cannock, the first Recorder of Walsall, who in his time was reputed the ablest Attorney-at-Law in England; and to his influence may perhaps be ascribed the connection of his grandson with the Grammar School. John Hough was born in London on April 12th, 1651, and was educated at Walsall School, which at that time probably occupied no mean position in the county. He was afterwards admitted Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and speedily rose to be President, a position from which he was ejected by the despotic king, who committed him to the Tower, and installed a Catholic of questionable repute in his place. On the accession of William he was reinstated, receiving in addition the Bishopric of Oxford. In 1699 he was translated to Lichfield as its seventy-fourth bishop. In 1715 he was offered, by George I., the Archbishopric of Canterbury, which honour he declined, and he was, therefore, in 1717, appointed to Worcester. He married Lettice, daughter of Thomas Fisher, of Walsh Hall, Meriden, Warwickshire, and died on May 4th, 1743, at the age of 93, universally beloved and regretted.

Gough, "Hist.  
of Myddle,  
Salop."

## PEDIGREE OF BYRCHE OF LEACROFT.

THE  
GRAMMAR  
SCHOOL.*Arms*—Azure, three fleur de lis argent, a canton of the last for distinction.

John Hough was a man most amiable in his character, and of retiring disposition, while he was noted for his devout piety. He re-modelled the Palace at Eccleshall, and planted the Grove there, it is said, by tradition, with his own hands; while for the comfort of his relatives at Leacroft, he conferred upon them the benefits of a good water supply. The Magdalen dispute, which brought his name into prominence, may be read in the "History of Macaulay," and the account of it is one of the most spirited passages in that work. He was buried at Worcester Cathedral, under a monument by Roubiliac, the drapery of which was pronounced by Flaxman as the finest he had ever seen. His arms are preserved in the Episcopal window at Lichfield.

Harwood,  
"Lichfield,"  
p. 123.

THE  
GRAMMAR  
SCHOOL.

"Life of  
Somers,"  
by Campbell.

"Hist. of House  
of Commons,"  
by Towns-  
hend.

Bucks Ms.,  
Brit. Museum.

European  
Magazine,  
v. xxiii, p. 4.

Among the most eminent statesmen of the reign of William III. was John, first Lord Somers, who rose from a comparatively low position to fill successively the offices of Solicitor and Attorney General, Lord Keeper, and finally Lord High Chancellor of England. He was born on March 4th, 1650, at the old Abbey of Whiteladies, near Worcester, famous among other things as being the place where Chas. II. stayed before his disastrous defeat at that town, and from whence he effected his escape to Boscobel and Bentley, leaving behind him "his gaiters, two pairs of white fringed gloves, with other wearing apparel." At the College School of Worcester, he came under the care of Dr. Bright, a man distinguished for his classical abilities, and for his power of communicating to others the large literary stores he himself possessed. From him young Somers imbibed that taste for elegant literature, which clung to him through life. Leaving Worcester, he is said to have been placed for a short time at "a private academy at Walsall," whether the Grammar School or not is fairly open to doubt. Of his early life only a few bare incidents are left, but we have a glimpse of his sojourn here from the pen of his friend Dr. Birch, of Worcester, a relative of Bishop Hough: "The account of his behaviour at school I had many years ago from a schoolfellow. I think Walsal in Staffordshire was the place where they learned them grammar together. I remember very well his account of Johnny Somers being a weakly boy wearing a black cap, and never so much as looking on when they were at play." From this town he went to a private academy at Sheriff Hales in Shropshire, kept by a Mr. Wodehouse, and from thence to Trinity College, Oxford. Step by step he rose to the summit of popularity, he became an illustrious statesman, an accomplished and highly impartial judge, a poet, and an author, whose elegant diction and versatile power placed him in the first rank of the classical writers of his age. Then came

his connection with the "Partition Treaty," a connection which gave offence to the Tories, and resulted in his impeachment by the House of Commons. He was acquitted by the House of Lords, but his health now began to fail him, and he retired to his villa at Cheshunt, and devoted himself almost entirely to the study of literature. Here he expired on 26th April, 1716, from an attack of apoplexy. In St. Stephen's Hall at Westminster, is a fine statue to the memory of Lord Somers, by W. C. Marshall, A.R.A.

THE  
BLUE  
SCHOOL

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## THE BLUE COAT SCHOOL.

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The Blue Coat School, another old Walsall institution, may fitly be mentioned here. Its origin is quite uncertain, but probably lies buried with some long lost charity. The school is principally supported by subscriptions and collections at the churches, in addition to which it has several sources of permanent income, including £10 per annum paid by the Corporation, as interest of £200 left by John Whittingham in 1723, £4 4s. 0d. from land left by John Taylor, and interest on £300 left by Mrs. Crump in 1848, and £200 left by Mrs. Curtis in 1849. In 1854, the late Francis Baildon Oerton gave £50 with the proviso that it should be invested and the interest given at Christmas to the boy and girl who had made during the year the most satisfactory progress. The



THE  
BLUE COAT  
SCHOOL.

school originally educated 40 children, 24 boys and 16 girls, all of whom were clothed in blue at the expense of the charity. Formerly the school was held in a room over the old Market Cross, which stood at the top of High Street.

Among the Town Records for the year 1776, is an agreement between the Corporation and Mr. George Cotterell, "on being permitted to teach the children in the Cross Chamber."

shaw,  
"Appendix."

About 1800, "the Charity School was removed from the Crosse to a good house purchased for the master by the trustees." Subsequently a new school was erected on The Bridge at the expense of the inhabitants and with some donations, where the *Observer* office now stands. In 1820, the National School was established and amalgamated with the Blue Coat School. In 1827, the building being found too small, it was, mainly from public subscription, taken down and enlarged, and schoolrooms were added, at a cost of £1,200. In niches on either side of the entrance were statues representing a boy and girl in the costume of the school. These were executed by a native sculptor, and were paid for out of an unappropriated fund raised for the presentation of a piece of plate to Queen Caroline, the Consort of George IV., who, however, died before the intention could be carried into effect. In the centre of the building was an illuminated clock. In 1859 the schools were transferred to their present position in St. Paul's Close, at a cost of £5,600, which was raised by a sale of school property, and a government grant of £1,960. They possess accommodation for over 600 children, and are under the control of a body of trustees, of whom the Vicar of Walsall is the chairman.

## GENERAL HISTORY.

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For nearly a century after the Conquest, the records of Walsall history are of the most meagre description, and comprise only a few occasional references to the manor, which have already received notice.

In the time of Henry I., the name of Warine Plea Roll. de Walesdale is recorded as being a landowner in Walesdale, whilst Eva his daughter, and Robert his grandson, are also referred to.

The earliest entry to be found in the Pipe Rolls is in 9 Henry II. (1162-3), when Alexander, Clericus, the Sheriff of Staffordshire, is mentioned as rendering account to the Crown of £5 as his due from Walesdal.

The Fine Roll for 4 Henry III. (1219-20), states that William Ruffus gives one palfrey to the king, to have until the king is of age a weekly market every Monday at his Manor of Walesdal, and to have an annual fair for two days at his aforesaid manor, on the eve and on the day of St. Matthew the Apostle, unless the same market and fair be to the damage of neighbouring markets.

In 12 Henry III. (1227-8), the Plea Rolls record an action brought by Hugh de Bueles against John de Parles for two parts of a mill in Rushale, as the right of Alice his wife. The defendant pleaded that he did not hold the mill in fee, for a certain freeman held the mill of him for 18s. a year, viz., one William de Walesdale. In another deed of this time, William

Erdswick.  
p. 305.

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1261-1271.  
—

de Waleshale is referred to as "clericus." With a namesake we shall meet at a subsequent period.

The Patent Rolls contain various entries relating to land and houses in Walishal, and an entry dated 46 Henry III. (1261-2) is sufficiently interesting to be quoted in full. In this year William de Morteyn is summoned for restitution of chattels, which he unjustly detains from William de Lay and Isabella his wife. "In the 43 Henry III., he came to the vill of Walsale to the house of a certain John Andrew, a villein of the aforesaid William and Isabell, and therefrom took corn, viz., pulse, wheat, oats, and hay to the value of 40s., and carried them off and still detains them." And William appears and denies the charge, and puts himself upon the country, and William and Isabel do the same, &c.

Patent Roll.

In 47 Henry III. (1263), it is stated that Elena Achilles appeared against Brice Achilles, in a plea that he should hold to a convention made between them respecting 4s. rent in Waleshale. Brice did not appear, and was to be attached for the morrow of St. John the Baptist.

Record Office.

The Plea Rolls of Cannock Forest for the year 1271, contain several entries of local interest. Thus "John the Baker (Pistor), of Waleshall, had newly occupied an acre and rood in the fee of William Morteyn, which he had enclosed with a ditch and hedge, the latter of which was ordered to be thrown down." William the Wheeler (Rotarius), also of Waleshall, had occupied two acres and enclosed it. He was fined 2s., and the fence was to be thrown down. William, son of Robert de Blockeswich, Richard, son of Spivey of Russale, and William de Boeles, are also fined for similar offences. The Plea Rolls for this year further state that "the wood of William de Morteyng which is called Walesale, was devastated during the war by Ralph Basset in one part, and again by the said William in another part, so that scarcely any of it now remains; William is amerced, and the wood is to be taken into

the king's hands. Ralph Basset is dead." This William de Morteyn would appear to have been somewhat of a desperate character, as the following entry shows. "It is presented, &c., that when the king had given to Philip Marmyon a stag and a buck in the said forest (Cannock), that Philip and William de Morteng had taken on the morrow of the Nativity of the Blessed Mary in the same year a doe and a fecon of a buck, and a cheverell, and on the Wednesday following a doe. The said William appeared, and being convicted of it is committed to prison. A day was given to him at Salop on the morrow of All Souls to pay his fine. It is also presented that William de Morteyn, Robert his brother, and Haward his esquire, are customary malefactors in the said forest." This same year Melithenta, widow of William the Forester of Blokeswic, is fined for half an acre assarted in the fee of William de Mortein 6/9, and 2/3 for the value of the crops.

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127.

Mort.  
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In the Plea Roll for 56 Henry III. (1271-2), is the following curious piece of information: "Matilda, the widow of Robert de Rughleg (Rowley), appealed in the County Court, William de Hundesacre (Handsacre), Robert de Blakegrave, Richard, son of Jordan de Barre, and Henry de Acton, for the death of her husband Robert, and she did not appear. She is therefore to be taken into custody. And William now appeared and stated that Robert de Rughleg was a common robber, and he was looking for him in Walesale, and found him there, and Robert fled, and would not stand to the king's peace, therefore, they beheaded him, and he appealed to a jury. The jury say that Robert was a robber, and had beheaded one of his companions at Walesale, and William and others coming up, wished to apprehend him, and Robert defended himself and fled, and they had killed him in consequence; and they say that he was a robber, and was flying from the king's peace (diffugiens de pace), therefore, William and the others are acquitted; and they say that Matilda

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1272-1276.  
—

appealed the said William and the others named, at the instigation of William de Mortheyn, and Robert, his brother, they are, therefore, to be taken into custody."

Plea Roll.

In 2 Ed. I. (1273-4), is recorded a law suit between Nicholas le Archer, of Syberloft, Northampton, and Margaret la Ruse, one of the co-heirs of the Manor of Walsall, for some land, &c., in Caldecote. The case was adjourned until the following year, when Nicholas pleaded that Margaret had no entry to the land, except through William le Rus, who had unjustly disseised William le Archer, his grandfather, whose heir he is. Margaret appeared and stated she held the land in purparty with one Emecina, her sister, without whom she could not answer to the Plea. Her sister is therefore summoned.

The two sisters appear in the ensuing year, and state that William le Archer, the grandfather of Nicholas, had remitted all his claim in the tenement in dispute to their father, William le Rus, by his deed, which they produce; and as all the witnesses to it are dead, the Sheriff is commanded to summon a jury. This suit, after being twice adjourned owing to the absence of one or other of the defendants, is met with again in 1293 and 1294, &c., and is then finally lost sight of.

Ibid.

4 Ed. I. (1275-6.) An assize, &c., to enquire "if Margaret la Russe, Robert de Benteley, and others, had unjustly disseised Richard, son of Roger Illary, of a messuage and twenty acres of land in Schelfhulle. The defendants state that Schelfhulle is a hamlet of Walesdale, where no suit is pleaded except by writ of right close. Richard admitted that Schelfhulle was a hamlet within the Manor of Walesdale, but stated that Ralph, son of Richard de Schelfhulle, was formerly lord of the tenement in question, and it was held freely of the Manor of Walesdale before the Conquest of England without any condition of sokemanship, and he had enfeofed the said Richard, son of Roger Hillary, without any condition of sokemanship,

rendering 5s. in lieu of all services. Margaret stated that the said Ralph and all the other tenants were accustomed to give pannage and to be tallaged and perform other services pertaining to sokemen. The jury say that the said tenement was held by soccage, and the tenant was tallaged with the other sokemen whenever the king tallaged his other manors throughout England. Verdict for Margaret and the other defendants."

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The above assize may be noted as giving some corroborative support to the question of the existence of the Manor of Walesdale prior to the Norman period.

In 6 Ed. I. (1277-8), William, the son of Roger Hillary, sued Margaret le Rus, William de Bentley, Richard, Robert and Thomas, his brothers, Hugh de Penefeld, and four others named, for coming *vi et armis* to his house at Chelfield and taking his goods, to the value of 100s., and wounding, beating and illtreating him, for which he claimed £100 as damages. The defendants did not appear, and the Sheriff is ordered to distrain and produce them at Trinity term. The termination of this suit is likewise not recorded, but in 8 Ed. I. (1279-80) there is an assize, &c., "to enquire if Margaret le Russe had unjustly disseised Richard, son of Roger Illory, of a messuage and six acres of land in Sheleftel." Richard withdraws his suit. Another assize, &c., is taken at this time at Stafford, "if Margaret le Rousse had unjustly disseised William, son of William de Schelfeld, of four acres of land in Schelfeld. Margaret appeared by her bailiff, who stated that William le Rous, the father of Margaret, had died seized of the tenement, and it had been assigned to her by the king as part of her moiety. Case adjourned."

9 Ed. I. (1280-81.) An assize, &c., "if the Abbot of Oseney and twenty-four others named had unjustly disseised Margaret la Rousse of common of pasture in Stonhall appurtenant to her free tenement in Walesdale, viz., in 500 acres of wood and waste,

Ibid

Ibid

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HISTORY.  
1281-1282.

where she was accustomed to common with all kind of cattle throughout the year. The abbot admitted her right to common of pasture in the open season. Verdict for Margaret."

Plea Roll.  
9 Ed. I.

Still another assize at Pencrig, to try "whether Margaret la Rousse, of Walesshale, and John Paynel (her husband) had unjustly disseised the Abbot of Hales of common of pasture in thirty-six acres of waste in Walesshale. Margaret appeared and answered for herself and John, and stated that Walesshale was of the ancient demesne of the king, where such a writ would not run, and prayed for judgment on it. The abbot replied that, whether Walesshale was of ancient demesne or not, she ought not to object to the writ, because one Henry, son of Richard, had held the tenement in Walesshale, to which the common of pasture was appurtenant of the Church of Walesshale, and had enfeofed thereof one of the abbots, his predecessor. Margaret stated that the tenement in question had been held of her ancestors for 18d. per annum, of which 12d. was assigned to the lighting of the church, and the other 6d. was paid to her ancestors, and of the 6d. she is in seisin of 3d., and William de Morteyn, her co-parcener, is in seisin of the other 3d. The jury say that Richard de Calnhull, the father of Henry, formerly held the tenement in question of the said Church of Walesshale and of the abbots, who were the parsons of it, for the service of 12d. annually, and they held it in free alms of the gift of the ancestors of Margaret; and the same Richard held a croft in the same vill, of the same lord, for the service of 6d. annually, and Henry, the son of Richard, wishing to benefit the church, had enfeofed the abbott's predecessor of the tenement, and the common of pasture was appurtenant to it. Verdict for the abbot, damages 2s."

*Ibid.*

10 Ed. I. (1281-2). In this year we find a suit between William de Morteyn, one of the co-heirs of William le Rus, of Walsall, and a certain Robert

Sautcheverel, concerning common of pasture in Ryseley, Co. Derby, which belonged to Eustace de Morteyn, his grandfather. The suit was adjourned, and is continued in 16 Ed. I. (1287-8), when Roger continues the case, but is amerced for a false claim.

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HISTORY.  
1281-1286.

In the Coram Rege Roll, 11 Ed. I. (1282-3) we find the following record: "Be it known to all, &c., that I, John Paynel, of Caldecote, and Margery, my wife, have granted, &c., to Master Simon de Balidene, Canon of the Church of Lichfield, Mapetrehurst in the Manor of Walesdale, with its buildings, crops of grass, &c., beginning from the time of the Feast of the Invention of the Holy Cross, in the eleventh year of King Edward, son of King Henry, for five years, for twenty marks," &c. William Hillari, of Bescot, and Richard Diriday, of Walesdale, are among the witnesses to this deed.

Record Office.

The succeeding year is marked by the death of William de Morteyn, and the inquiry taken after that event gives some particulars of the town at that date. The jury say that "William was seized of a moiety of the Manor of Walesdale, which he held of the lord the king, as a freehold (*liber firmarius*), for 40s., payable at the Feast of St. Michael every year at the king's exchequer. That he held also a certain messuage worth yearly, with the garden, 3s.4d., also of annual rents of free tenants, 40s.11d. The rent of the Burgesses of the vill of Walsale was worth 40s., and of the customary tenants £4 5s. 2½d. Also he held one carucate of land, worth yearly one mark, and a certain meadow worth 10s. Also a certain park, the pannage and herbage of which are worth yearly 13s.4d. Also a mill worth 44s., a fish pond 6s.8d., and a pasture 3s. The toll of the market 3s.; and the pleas and receipts of the court were worth 10s. Total £14 13s. 1½d."

Inq. Post  
Mortem.  
12 Ed. I.

In the Pleas of Cannock Forest for 1286 we find recorded the disposition of land in the manor and the names of some of those holding it (*vide* p. 63), while we are also told that William Morteyn had enclosed



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1286-1288.

Plea Roll.

two acres now held by Roger his son, with a ditch and dead hedge, which was to be thrown down.

In this same year (1286), Robert de Benetleye and his brothers are committed to prison for taking four bucks in the Bailiwick of Benetleye, one of which he had given to Margaret le Russe, &c.

Assize Roll.

16 Ed. I. (1287-8). An assize, &c., "if John Paynel and Margaret his wife had unjustly disseised Henry, son of William de Schefell, of a messuage and twenty-two acres of land in Walsale and Schelfeel. John and Margaret stated they claimed nothing in the land except the custody of it till the full age of Henry, William his father having held the tenement of them by knight's service. Henry stated that William Ruffus (le Rous), of Walshale, had given the land to his father, William, son of William de Schelfhulle, and to his heirs for homage and service, rendering yearly 5s. 4d. for all service except suit of Court and for the reinforcement of the Court, when the King's writ was there, and saving the *forinsic* service of the King; and after the death of his father he had entered into the said tenements as his son and heir, and was in good and peaceable seisin until John and Margaret had dispossessed him, and he admitted he was under age; and afterwards he said that it evidently appeared by a clause in the deed that John and Margaret could not have the custody of the land because it stated '*salvo forinseco servicio quod nec ad me nec heredes meos pertinet*,' and that by these words the feoffor had excluded himself and his heirs from all forinsic service," &c.

Ibid.

In this same year (16 Ed. I.), is another assize, &c., "if John Paynel and Margaret his wife had unjustly disseised Florence, the wife of William Tromwyne le Chevachur (The Rider), of a messuage and half a carucate and half a virgate of land, twenty-four acres of waste, fourteen acres of pasture, three acres of wood, and 28d. of rent in Walesale. John and Margaret appeared by the said John, bailiff for Margaret, and pleaded that Walesale was of the

ancient demesne of the Crown, where no writ was current but the small close writ. William and Florence stated that the said Margaret, the mother of Florence," &c. (sentence left incomplete.) William and Florence afterwards withdrew their writ. In connection with this suit we may note that the Rider or Forestarius Equitans was a name given to the hereditary foresters to distinguish them from the ordinary forester, who corresponded to the modern gamekeeper.

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1238-1294.

In 19 Ed. I. (1290-1), the suit between the Abbot of Hales and John Paynel and Margaret his wife, in a plea of trespass, is dismissed, the Abbot not appearing to prosecute it. Plea Roll.

In the 21 Ed. I. (1292-3) is another interesting local assize, to enquire "whether Robert Scridup, the father of Nicholaa, the wife of Richard, &c., was seized as of fee when he died of 14s. of rent and half a virgate of land in Blockeswych, of which Roger de Mortayn had deforced him of 7s. of rent, and John Paynel and Margaret his wife had deforced him of 7s. of rent and half a virgate of land." The defendants pleaded that the tenements were held in sokemanship of the Manor of Walshalle, which is of ancient demesne of the King; and as a jury stated this to be the case, the suit was dismissed. Assize Roll.

The same year John Paynel and Margaret his wife sued the Abbot of Hales for a messuage and seven acres of land and an acre and a half of meadow in Walesdale, which Henry de Walwenhalle formerly held, and which should revert to them as their escheat, inasmuch as Henry, who had been hanged for felony, held the tenement of them for a service of 18d. annually and a pound of cummin. The jury found in favour of the abbot. Ibid.

For the sake of completeness we may just glance at two or three of the remaining suits of this reign.

In 22 Ed. I. (1293-4), Henry de Wednesfield was summoned by William de Boweles for causing waste and destruction in a wood he held for a term of ten Plea Roll.

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1294-1300.

years in Russhale, and he complained that Henry had pulled down a house worth 20s., and cut down 40 ash trees each worth 3d., and ten pear trees each worth 2d., for which he claimed 100s. as damages. The result of this action does not appear.

Plea Roll.

Another assize is taken in 27 Ed. I., to enquire "whether William de Boweles and Robert his brother, Simon, son of Robert de Walsale, John de Walsale, and others had unjustly disseised John de Cave of various lands and two hundred acres of wood in Rusale (Rushall). The Sheriff is ordered to arrest the defendants."

*Ibid.*

The following year Ralph de Hengham sued Geoffrey de Walsale for 50 marks. The defendant did not appear, and the Sheriff stated that Geoffrey was a cleric and had no lay fee. A mandate was sent to the Bishop to produce him before the Court.

*Ibid.*

Proceedings are recorded in 28 Ed. I. (1299-1300) against Margaret la Russe for the death of her husband, John Paynel, who had been killed at Walshale. It seems that Margaret in a former summons had refused to appear, and the Sheriff was ordered to arrest her. Afterwards she appeared before the king at York, and was committed to the custody of the Marshal. Being asked how she wished to be acquitted of the death of her husband, she pleaded not guilty, and put herself upon the country. In 30 Ed. I. (1301-2) a jury came before the king at Westminster, and Margaret was brought from the Marshalsea, and the jury stated that she was not guilty of the death of her husband, nor had abetted or assented to it. She was therefore acquitted.

*Ibid.*

In 1306 Roger Illary of Walesale sued Thomas le Rus for a debt of 113s. 4d., but the suit was adjourned, because the said Thomas was in the retinue of John de Hasting in the king's service, by the king's command, in Scotland, and had letters of protection to last till Michaelmas.

The Patent and Plea Rolls of this period contain many entries relating to claims of land and tenements,

&c., which it is unnecessary and would be wearisome to particularise. We may, however, note in passing an assize which Margery, daughter of Richard de Rughlowe, brought against Everard, the Bailiff of Walesdale, and others, for the death of Thomas de Rughlowe, her brother, &c. This suit, which is dated 24 Ed. I., is continued in succeeding years.

GE:  
H1:  
130:

In the Walesdale Chartulary are several other deeds which relate to this time. One is a charter of 32 Ed. I. (1303-4), made by Richard Paynell and Isabel de la Dawe, his wife, to Thomas le Rous, of certain moveable goods. Another is a charter, 4 Ed. II. (1310-11), of Roger de Morteyn, Knt., to Thomas le Rous, Knt., of a certain meadow in Walshale. Others of a like character are dated 6 Edward II. Then come several curious deeds, each containing the grant of a 'native,' with his goods and chattels, thus showing a complete state of serfdom in the district at that period. By the first, Robert Paygnell grants to Margery le Rous "Henry, son of William le Litol, my native, with all his goods and chattels, moveable and immoveable for ever, for 20s. sterling, which the said lady Margery la Rous paid into my hands. So that neither I, the said Robert Paignel, nor my heirs, nor my assigns, nor their heirs nor anyone in my name, shall be able to claim any right or possession in the said Henry or in his goods and chattels from this time forth." Geoffrey Atte Hurst and John Pistor (baker), of Walshale, are among the witnesses to this deed.

In 3 Ed. II. (1310), Thomas le Rous gives, grants, and confirms to Sir Roger de Morteyn, Ralph Pistor (baker), of Walshale, with all his tenement in the open fields of Arumscote, and 4d. annual rent for the same, with all service, &c. "And I the aforesaid Thomas and my heirs, will warrant and forever defend the aforesaid Ralph with the aforesaid tenement and its other appurtenances to the aforesaid Sir Roger and his heirs against all mortals."

Charta  
Wale

In 11 Edward II. (1317-8), Sir Thomas le Rous <sup>ibid.</sup>

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grants in the same manner, to William Hillari, his 'native.'

The above grants are interesting as showing the existence of serfdom in the town at this time, the word 'native' signifying a born servant or serf. Of these serfs there appear to have been two kinds,—one being attached to the manor, and passing with it; serfs of this description were called 'villeins regardant.' Others were annexed to the person of their proprietor, were transferable by deed, and were called 'villeins in gross.'

In the Originalia Roll, tempo Ed. II., we find the following record: "Reddisseisin. In the same manner the king regrants to William Hillari his seisin, and to Robert de Essington and Margaret his wife common (de cōa) of pasture in Essington, which pertains to his free tenement in Walshale," &c.

We have now almost reached the time, 12 Ed. III. (1338-9), when Ralph Bassett, of Drayton, obtained a confirmation of the grants by the king to Herbert Rufus and became lord of the manor.

Here we may fitly pause and review, so far as is practicable, the physical features of the town as it existed at this period, and the principal families which were then living in and around it.

Plans of the  
Forest, 1290.

Waleshale itself must have been a small but very picturesque little place, surrounded in a horseshoe manner by the great forest of Canuock, which stretched east to Drayton Bassett, south-west to Bescote and Wolvernehampton, and to the north as far as Wichnour and Shugborough. The southern boundary of the forest was marked by the Hole, Hoar, or Or Brook, which still runs through the present Arboretum from the head of the stream at Woodend. Within the forest was the park of Waleshale, the limits of which have been already stated. In accordance with ancient custom the park would be loosely fenced out, so that no impediment was offered to the free passage of the game within the forest, the laws in relation to which were of a most severe kind, and

P. 80.

strictly prohibited the taking of venison or vert, or even the keeping of a dog unless deprived of its claws. The park itself abounded "with great timber trees and deere," and was, in 1255, in the possession of Geoffrey de Bakepuz. It afterwards passed to Sir Roger Morteyn, and in 20 Ed. I. (1291-2), there is an assize recorded "to enquire who the malefactors were that entered the park of Roger de Morteyn at Walsale, and chased and carried off his game there." The park ceased to exist some time before the survey of Erdswick.

GEN  
HIS  
1318

Tenure

Patent

On the hill of Walesdale rose the old parish church of All Saints, at this time in the possession of the Abbot of Hales, who was Vicar in 1309. It was now in a pitiable condition,—deprived of its revenues, of its advowson, of its chapels of Wednesday and Rushall, and its services being performed vicariously; while its rich chantries and emblazoned windows had not yet dawned into existence. The value of the living at this time, according to the "Taxatio Ecclesiastica" of 1292, was £12; tithes, £1 4s. 0d. The people themselves lived mainly around the church hill, where the narrow winding streets still mark out the lines of the old habitations, but their method of house building was not so substantial as that of later days, and no traces of their domestic architecture are now left to us.

The Aid or Subsidy Rolls contain records of the supplies granted by Parliament to the king, "to aid him in his wars and emergencies." The following list gives the names of the taxable inhabitants of Walesdale and Ruyshale in the 1 Ed. III.; and is the earliest extant Subsidy Roll for Staffordshire. Mr. Gillespie remarks that "out of the 27 persons named in Walesdale, only 11 remained to be taxed at the time of the next Subsidy, which was five years later." The Commission extended to those possessing goods to the value of ten shillings and upwards in the year 1327, "being persons taxed to the amount of a twentieth of their moveables as a subsidy for the defence of the Kingdom against the Scotch."

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## WALESHALE.

	s.	d.
De Thoma le Rous ... ..	iiij.	iiij.
Will'o Illory ... ..	iiij.	
Emma Marchis ... ..	ij.	ix.
Rog'o Illory ... ..	ij.	vj.
Steph'o Petyt ... ..	iiij.	
Rad'o Petyt ... ..	v.	
Will'o Pach ... ..		xviiij.
Thoma Leverich ... ..	xxj.	oñ.qu.
Heur' de Alta Stelfeld ... ..	xv.	
Rob'to filio Nicholai ... ..	ij.	
Will'o Sweyn ... ..		xv.
Clemente de Blockeswich ... ..	xij.	
Elyn de Hawerthyn ... ..		ix.
Rob'to de Hawerthyn [Harden] ... ..		ix.
Willo' de Schareshulfe ... ..		vij.oñ.
Ric'o filio Sibille ... ..		ix.
Joh'e Leverich ... ..		ix.
Will'o le Taborer ... ..		xij.
Rob'to de Honesworthe [Handsworth] ... ..		ix.
Will'o Hewet ... ..		xij.
Joh'e Ewake ... ..		xij.
Will'o del Hurst ... ..		xij.
Rob'to Wyliames ... ..		ix.
Will'o de Bruera ... ..	iiij.	vj.
Joh'e le Turnur ... ..	iiij.	vj.
Will'o Jhones ... ..	iiij.	vj.
Joh'e le Heustere ... ..	iiij.	vj.
Summa ... ..	<u>lj.s. v.d.</u>	<u>qu. pñ.</u>

## RUYSHALE (RUSHALL).

	s.	d.
De Will'o de Boweles ... ..	iii.	
Rob'to de Orleseye ... ..	ij.	
Rog'o del Peke ... ..	ij.	vj.
Will'o Horeye ... ..	iiij.	vj.
Will'o filio Johannæ ... ..	iiij.	
Rob'to Em ... ..	iiij.	
Wil'mo de Wednesfeld ... ..	ij.	vj.
Rog'o de Gryngeleye ... ..	ij.	vj.
Paulo Medewey ... ..	ij.	
Thoma Illory ... ..	iiij.	vj.
Ric'o le Smyth ... ..	ij.	vj.
Summa ... ..	<u>xxx.s.</u>	<u>pñ.</u>

The Manor House has already been alluded to, and is indicated in early records as the "capital messuage." It stood in the park, and the ancient moat still remains not far from the present Workhouse. Ralph, last Lord Bassett, was born there, but on the accession of the powerful family of Warwick, it would probably fall into disuse, and thus it happens that we meet with so little mention of it.

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The water mill was introduced by the Romans, and formed a prominent object on many of the early manors. The "lord's mill with its millrace," has been already described, while others existed at Russdale (the Butts) and at Bescot (Bertinescote). This latter was probably at Elwell's Forge, which is a very ancient foundation. It may moreover be noted that in early times the volume of water in the brooklets and courses of the neighbourhood was very much larger than at present. The diminution is chiefly to be ascribed to mining and other operations, which have drained the surface to a great extent even within living memory.

The windmill at Caldmore was very ancient, and in 33 Ed. I. (1304-5) was in the possession of Sir Roger Morteyn. In England windmills were very old, and coeval with the earliest dawn of civilization. They usually stood in the neighbourhood of the church, and where there were no running streams the inhabitants were almost entirely dependent upon them for their daily bread. In Saxon times a corn mill was an usual appendage to a manor. Formerly there were several windmills in this locality. Besides the one at Walesdale, there were three at Wednesbury, one at Bloxwich, and one at Rushall, in the "windmill field" opposite "The Villa." This latter is still marked in the old maps (Shaw) of the district.

Chartulary of  
Walesdale.

Hist. of  
Wednesbury.

Of the population itself at this period we have no reliable data; it could not, however, have numbered more than a few hundreds, and we find that two centuries afterwards it was computed at only 1,809.

There is nothing to show that at this early time



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Inquisitiones  
Nonarum.

the town possessed any distinctive trade. Many of the inhabitants doubtless found employment on the manor and in the cultivation of the land, large tracts of which were then arable. In the absence of all distinct evidence, we have to glean from indirect testimony. Thus, in the Nona Roll, 13 Ed. III. (1339-40), it states that the town of Wolvernehampton, then apparently larger and more important than Waleshale, "had no merchants." If so we can scarcely suppose our own small town to have boasted of many.

Hist. of  
Manchester.

Wright's  
"Eiconium."

Hist. of  
Manchester.

Of mining operations about here we have likewise little reliable information, and it is difficult to define that period when our ancestors first began "to digge for iron ores and secole." A tradition says that secoles were borne on mules' backs from Wednesbury to Aston furnace in the days of the ancient Britons. Recent evidence has rendered it tolerably certain that coal was worked and its uses were well understood by the early inhabitants of this island. "The Romans," says Whitaker, "appear continually using coal in Britain, and cinders have frequently been found in the fire-places of Roman houses and villas." In the hypocausts of Wroxeter they are met with in great abundance. The Saxons we know used it largely, as is proved by ancient deeds; but by both races the surface supply only was used. Coal, indeed, about here appears to have been much worked from very early times, and Hawkes Smith, a local historian, admits that he can explain by no other circumstance the existence, at an extremely remote era, of a cluster of towns so near together as Wolverhampton, Wednesbury, Walsall, and Dudley.

See also p. 431.

In the Chartulary of Waleshale are several covenants between Robert Bond and others and Sir Thomas la Rous not to dig for coal. Each is dated 19 Ed. II. (1325-6.)

Leland, writing about 1538, says, "there are secoles at Weddesbyrie near Walsall," thus showing that the work at the latter place must have been quite

limited. In 1875 the number of collieries in the parish of Walsall amounted to 59, of which 17 were standing.

The limestone mines of this district are very ancient, and, as before stated, probably afforded materials to the Romans for building Etocetum and the military roads in this locality. Plot thought that the limeburners around Walsall were in advance of those in other districts, and he gives a long description of the method employed in working the stone. White, writing in 1834, remarks that "the lime of Rushall is much celebrated for its superior quality, taking a polish almost equal to marble, and raised from mines nearly eighty yards below the surface. The grey limestone, raised in immense quantities about two miles east of Walsall, is surpassed by none in the kingdom for its extraordinary adhesive qualities and its strength and durability. Hence it is in great demand," &c. In the strata is found the well-known Barr Trilobite, *Illeenus Barriensis*, but fossils of this kind are now but rarely met with.

Limeworks are first mentioned here in 19 Ed. II. (1325-6), when "Thomas le Rouse, knt., grants to Robert Bonde three acres of his waste land in the Bircheles, on condition that he should not make any mines of limestone in the same."

Iron was worked here from a very early period, possibly by the Britons, certainly by the Romans, who introduced the method of smelting, getting the blast by means of bellows worked by water-wheels, and using vast quantities of charcoal for fuel. From this cause the country around early lost much of its timber, and in 1665 we find Dud Dudley deploring the loss of the "mighty forests" which had once clothed South Staffordshire. Roman tools have been found in the ironstone workings of Cannock Chase, and also, according to the late Col. Bagnall, near Walsall. Roman coins have also been discovered in the caverns at Linley. A furnace existed on the Rushall road, near Lady pool, from very early times, and the ore was brought thither on horse back

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Hist. of  
Staffordshire,  
1834.

Timmins,  
"Handbook  
of Birming-  
ham," p. 228.

Chartulary of  
Walesdale.

"Metallum  
Martis."

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Plot, p. 130.

for the sake of the wood and water. This furnace was standing in 1718. Close by stood (1735) a forge, so that they smelted and turned out their iron in the rough. Plot, writing in 1686, mentions this furnace as standing "in the Park," near the "mill meadow."

Survey of  
Manor, 1617.

In making the present sewage farm at Bescot, the remains of an ancient ironworks were discovered. In 1617 this was in the possession of John Wollaston, and is described as "an iron mill or smythly." Another record calls it "the Bloome Smythie sometime the Inheritance of Walter Levison." The only other one in this neighbourhood was at Aston. The deed by Margery la Rouse, previously quoted, makes special mention of her mines of iron. In 1875 there were in Walsall 8 ironworks, 121 puddling furnaces, and 21 rolling mills.

Such were the chief features of the town, as it existed at the dawn of the fourteenth century. We may now take some little notice of the principal families living around here at this time, viz., the Hillarys of Bescot, the Bowles of Rushall, and the Bentleys of Bentley.

Archæological  
Journal, 1901.

The Hillarys were an old and wealthy family, who came from St. Hilaire du Harcouet, near Mortain, Normandy. They were the first known possessors of Bescot, and occupied an ancient moated house on the site near where Bescot Hall now stands. The moat is still to be clearly seen in a field adjoining. The Patent Rolls contain a solitary record of this old residence. "19 Ed. III. (1345-6.) The king of his especial grace grants to Roger Hillary that he may fortify his manse of Berkmenescote, in the Co. of Stafford, with a wall of stone and lime, and crenelate (embattle) the same, and may hold the same manse thus fortified and crenelated to himself and his heirs without hindrance," &c. The Hillaries owned lands at Bescot, Aldridge, Fisherwick, Bloxwich, Walsall, Prestwood, and West Bromwich, and branches of the same family appear to have lived at Aldridge, Rushall, and Tamworth. Roger Hillary (in old deeds Yllore, Illare, and

Hyllary) is first mentioned in 46 Henry III. (1261-2), and seems to have been a man of some note and importance, as we find Henry de Beresford, parson of the church at Corson, when signing a release of certain lands at Chaucombe, in 1273, saying in this wise: "In testimony of which, I place my<sup>Hi</sup> seal, and because my seal is unknown to many, I have procured the seal of Roger Hillari, my nephew, to be affixed to it." This Roger Hillary married a wife, Felicia, by whom he left several children. He himself seems to have died about 1273. William succeeded him, and in 1282 is mentioned<sup>Co</sup> as of Bescote. In 6 Ed. I. (1277-8), an assize records<sup>I</sup> that William, son of Roger Hillary, sued Margaret la Rus, William de Bentley and others, for coming *vi et armis* to his house at Chelfield, and taking his<sup>La</sup> goods to the value of 100s., and wounding, beating, and ill-treating him, for which he claimed £100 as damage. In 1273 Letters Patent were granted to<sup>ra</sup> William Hillary and Katherine, his wife, from John, lord of Bentley, "of the mill of Bentley, with the two pools," &c. The same year Richard Hillari,<sup>Hi</sup> clerk, has letters of presentation to the church of Kynfare. This is most probably the Richard, son of Roger, found in the Plea Rolls and the Chartulary. Another son was Thomas, who was Chief Bailiff of Offelowe in 21 Ed. I. He held the mill of Finchespath, at Wednesbury, and the Public Records contain various suits in which he was an actor. The remaining, and so far as we know, the eldest son, Roger, became the most notable of the family. He was in service with King Ed. I. (1308-1313), as one of his knights, *cum stipendia*, and was afterwards<sup>co</sup> made one of the Judges of the Common Pleas, a high position at that time. In 18 Ed. III. (1344-5), he had free warren at Walleshale and at Stretton super Fosse, by the fourth part of a knight's fee. He married Katherine, and died in 1356 (30 Ed. III.) He and his wife were buried in Walesdale church, under a monument already noticed. His arms whilst

- GENERAL HISTORY. 1327. with King Edward were sable, a fleur de lis, or, and the roll containing them is preserved in the British Museum. They were carved in full on the ancient pulpit, and painted on three of the windows. A sister, Joane, married William Mollesley, of Bilston.
- Inq. Post Mortem. An Inquisition after his death was held at Walesdale in 30 Ed. III. (1356), from which it appears that he held lands and house within this manor, as also at Rushall, Bromwych, and other places. He left a son, Roger, who succeeded to the title and estates, and in 32 Ed. III. (1358-9), "Roger, son and heir of Roger Hillary, held a messuage and land in Estwood, or Ashwood, and Roger Hillary (his father), brother and heir of Richard Hillary, paid to the king 2s., for his relief of the same, in 2 Ed. III. (1328-9)." Roger Hillary married Margaret Sutton, of Dudley, and in 15 Rich. II. (1391-2) founded the chantry in the old church.
- Patent Roll. In 1365 the king pardons Roger Hillary for the death of William Woolrich, of Wednesbury.
- Inq. Post Mortem. Sir Roger died without issue in 1 Henry IV. (1399-10), and held at the time of his death certain lands of the king, by grand sergeanty, viz., to look after the Hay of Ashwood. Amongst the lands which he held of the Earl of Warwick were the Manor of Bescote, and lands in Bloxwich, Alrewich, West Bromwich, and Fisherwick, by a knight's fee. He was buried in Walsall church, under "the fayre and curious monument" already described. On an ancient tablet in the church of the Grey Friars, at Lichfield, on which were the representations of Christ and St. Francis, was the portraiture of a man in his surcoat of arms, kneeling, and over his head was this inscription, relating, I presume, to this Sir Roger and his wife: "Orate pro animabus m'ri Rogeri Yllori et dominæ mar. . . ." On the death of this Sir Roger, his title died with him, and the estates passed to his nephew, Sir John Saer de Rochford, and thence by the de Clintons, into the family of Mountfort. From an Inquisition taken in
- Shaw, v. ii, p. 223.
- Twinley, "Hist. of Dudley Castle."
- Harwood, "Lichfield," p. 492.

4 Henry IV. (1402-3), we learn that he had two sisters, Johanna, who married (1st) John de Clinton, of Sutton, (2nd) John Saer de Rochford, by the latter of whom she had a son, the aforesaid John, who inherited Bescote. The remaining sister was the wife of Sir John Russell, by whom she left a daughter, Elizabeth. Other records give variations from this descent, and indeed the whole relationship of this ancient family abounds with difficulties, which it seems at present futile to attempt to unravel; the pedigree is therefore offered with considerable reserve.

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1327.

Master Roger Hillary, a namesake, and probably a relative of those at Bescot, was rector of the church at Allerwich (Aldridge) in 19 Ed. II. (1325-6), in which same year he makes an agreement with Sir Thomas Rouse about lands and tenements which he held in Walesdale.

Not far from the old hall of the Hillarys stood a small monastic building of begging Friars. They were connected with the Priory of Sandwell, and this house stood in what is now called the "moat meadow," in Friar's Park, not far from the present Crank Hall Farm. According to Reeves there was here a chapel, approached by a drawbridge, and the foundations were got up at the commencement of the present century. Near here is a place called the "dead woman's Buryall," thought to have been the cemetery of the monks, and many years ago some human bones were ploughed up, confirming the name which the field still bears.

Reeves,  
"Hist. of West  
Bromwich,"  
p. 46.

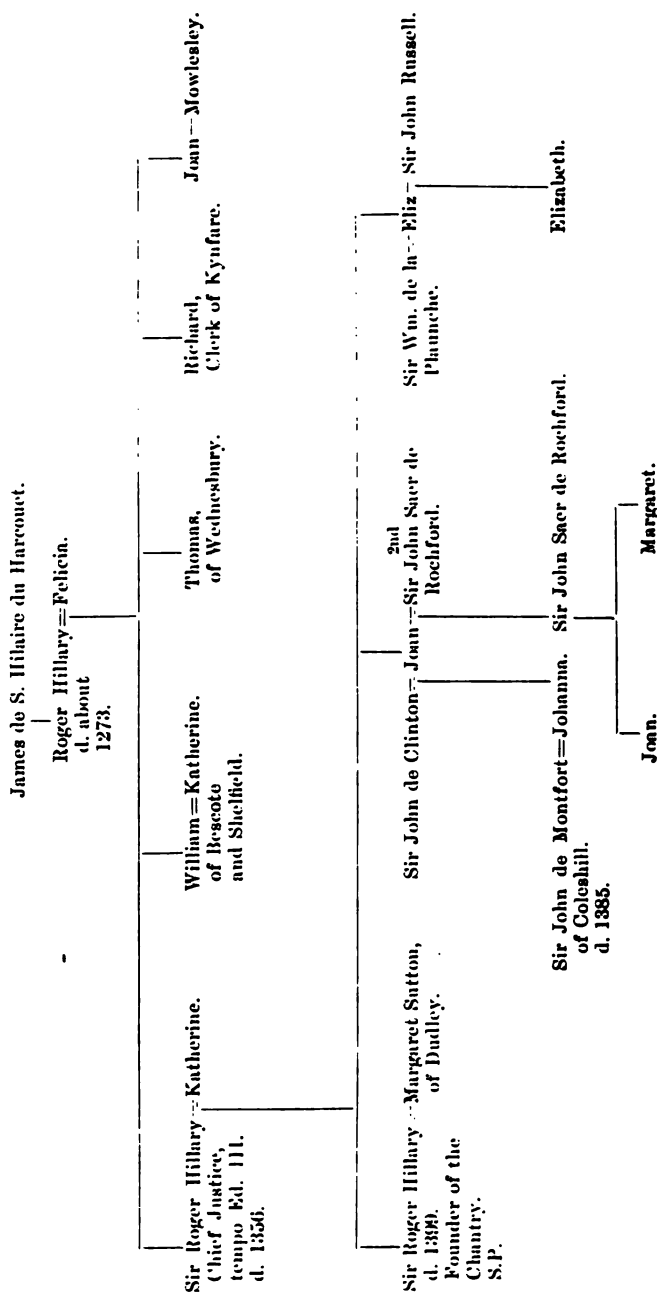
Cal. of Deeds,  
150.

The Priory of Sandwell was founded in 1180, on the site of an ancient hermitage, and was in existence in 1361, when only one monk remained, and he, asking the Bishop to choose a prior over the empty cells, was himself appointed. The Priory, never very flourishing, was finally suppressed in 17 Henry VIII. (1525-6), and given to Cardinal Wolsey. A stone coffin was dug up here early in the present century, and the Sancta Fons, or holy well, still remains.

Willet, "Hist.  
of West Brom-  
wich," p. 143.

## PEDIGREE OF HILLARY OF BESCOTE.

Arms—Arg., three fleur de lis between six cross crosslets, sable impaling Gu., fretty Or.



The Manor of Bentley is not named in Domesday, and it was probably at that date waste, and in the king's hands. William I. granted it to one Drew, alias Gervase, by the service of keeping the "Haye." This family assumed the name of Benetleye and continued here for many generations. Roger de Benetleye was sergeant or head forester. The office was honorary, and each sergeantry had its head, that of Bentley being the Hall. Not far from the present building is still to be seen an ancient moat, the site, probably, of this early structure. Roger de Benetleye, who flourished tempo John and Henry III., was succeeded by his son, also Roger, who granted by charter to William Ruffus, of Walesdale, his "land, wood, and water at Benetlei, for one pair of white gloves yearly." He left several sons, of whom William inherited his estate at Bentley. In 24 Henry III. (1239-40), Thomas, of Darlaston, grants the water-courses between Darlaston and Bentley to this William, for the purpose of making a mill. William also held the Baileywick of Benetleye, which was worth half a mark. The Manor of Benetleye he held in capite, and his life seems to have been an eventful one, for his name is met with in many suits of this period, and in 1269 he is prosecuted for carrying off cattle. He married Isabella, and died 4 Ed. I. (1275-6), leaving an heir, John, a minor, and three of his brothers as custodians of his Bailywick. The brothers, however, betrayed their trust, and with two of their grooms were convicted of deer-stealing, and committed to prison.

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1327.

Shaw, v. ii.

Oliver, "Hist.  
of Wolver-  
hampton,"  
p. 38.

Chartulary of  
Walesdale.

Pless of Can-  
nock Forest.

John, Lord of Bentley, signs the charter of freedom by William Morteyn and Sir Thomas Ruffus to the Burgesses of Walsall in 2 Ed. II. (1308-9), and in 17 Ed. II. (1323-4) is on a jury for prosecuting the Abbot of Burton. From the Bentleys the estate came to the Griffiths', of Wichnor, and from this family, in 1430, to that of Lone or Lane.

Erdswick,  
p. 313.

The old ruin of Rushall has always been mixed up with Walsall history, and more particularly, as we



GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1327.  
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shall see hereafter, during the time of the Civil War. Still preserved in the Mellish family is an ancient illuminated book which purports to give the early history of this manor and its first possessors. This record has been continued from time to time by various descendants, and extends to the early part of the 15th century. Opposite to the writing is the emblazoned coat of arms of Sir John Harpur. Formerly the book was chained up in the church at Rushall. According to this valuable MS., a Saxon named Neel was settled here long prior to the Conquest, and as he rendered fealty to the Conqueror, he was graciously allowed to retain possession of his estate. Unfortunately the Domesday record does not coincide with this statement, and we are therefore left in considerable perplexity not only as to the original possessors of the manor, but also as to their descendants during the century which succeeded to the Conquest.

Syton,  
Staffordshire  
Domesday."

Taking first the account of Domesday, we find it stated that "Turchil holds of William Fitzansculf one hyde in Rischale, which Waga held. The arable land is two carucates. In demesne there is half a carucate, and six villans, with two borders, have one carucate and a half. There is a mill rented at 4d., and one acre of meadow. A park or wood of 100 acres, yielding pasture, five furlongs in length and two in breadth." The whole was then and aforesaid valued at 10s. Wiware formerly held it with sac and soc. The parochial acreage was then 1,924 acres.

Following the old MS., and assuming that the writer thereof had never consulted Domesday, which at that date must have been practically inaccessible, we glean that the manor was held severally by Nigellus, Osbert and Richard, who belonged to the service and household of Henry II., and to whom the king granted the Manor of Roweley. Afterwards it was held by a son of Richard, to whom King John confirmed the Manor of Roweley, and who died in the service of this king in Guienne. He left a daughter,

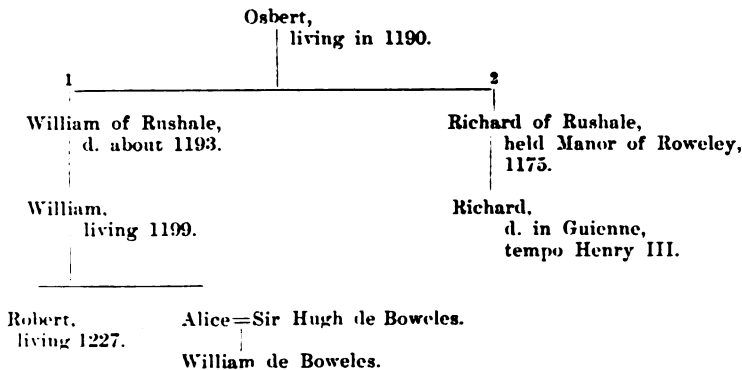
Alice, who was under age, and who therefore became a ward of the king. The account given by Erldswick is evidently compiled from this old MS. and from Domesday itself.

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HISTORY.  
1327.

Erldswick,  
p. 290.

Before passing on to consider the conflicting evidence of contemporary records, we may mention that the old Saxon house was moated and stood on a low, marshy site (whence possibly the name of Rischale from S., *rise*, a rush, and *hall*, a dwelling) a few hundred yards from the present building. The plan of the moat is still distinctly visible, and the hollowed tree by which it was emptied, was lately discovered in good preservation. The adjacent tumulus is thought by Mr. Duignan to be of Saxon origin, and to have little or no connection with the subsequent siege. Some years ago a trench 22 inches in depth was opened on the top for the purpose of planting trees; many fragments of human bones were found, all lying on the side next the hall, and mingled with them some few Saxon coins.

The Public Records contain many references to the early possessors of the manor. They vary, however, very considerably from the accounts above given; and the following table, which does not profess to be strictly accurate, yet appears to be deducible from the scattered records, may be of service in tracing the probable descent.



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Osbert appears to have been living in 1190, for in that year he signs a deed concerning Dudley Priory. At his death, or a little subsequently, the manor seems to have been held jointly by his two sons, William and Richard, who, however, did not long survive him, William being dead before 1193, leaving a son and heir, William, who was under age.

Chillington  
Charters.

Pipe Roll.  
3 John.

Of Richard, who died before 1200, it is recorded that he held the Manor of Rowley by gift of the king for knight's service, and he held besides, in 1175, the office of steward to the Bishop of Coventry. His son Richard, in 1200, pays 'x. marks and one palfrey' for land at Rowley, which his father held, and which had been confirmed to him by the king. He also held, in 1235, part of Rushale and the mill of Cradeley. His name is mentioned in an assize brought against him by his nephew in 1222, and in other contemporary records. He died in Guienne in the service of the king.

Curia Regis  
Roll.

Ibid.

Of William, the grandson of Osbert and heir to Rushall, it is recorded that in 1 John (1199-1200), when still under age, he brought an action against William Ruffus and others in respect of one mill and an acre of land in Rushale, with its belongings. He does not appear, and he and his sureties are amerced. In 1208, William de Barr presents himself for the fourth time in a plea of land, &c., against William of Rushale, who had previously excused himself for non-appearance by illness.

Pedes Finium.

William of Rushall was succeeded, it would seem, by a son Robert; but we learn little of him from the records, and what became of him eventually is unknown, as from this time the entries relate to his sister Alice, heiress to certain lands and belongings in Rushale. This Alice of Rushale became the wife of Sir Hugh Boweles, who was also of the household of Henry III. Sir Hugh died before 56 Henry III. (1271-2), for in that year the Plea Rolls record that his widow Alice brought a writ of entry against William Hillary respecting a virgate of land in

Rushale. Alice, the date of whose death is uncertain, left a son and heir, William; and in the Perambulation of Cannock Forest in 1300 it states that "William de Bouweles holds the vill of Ruschale, with the woods and wastes appurtenant of the Barony of Duddeleye, and they have been afforested since the time above stated." The family history of the possessors of Rushall is now continued in the MS. already quoted, and we need not at present follow it further.

GE:  
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The church, or, as it was then, the chapel of Rushall, is very ancient, and was at this time probably attached to the house, and not on the site of the present building. It was originally a chapelry of ease to the Church of Walesale, and about the year 1225 was granted, with that church, to the Abbey of Hales.

In 1248, Roger de Weseham, then Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, ordained a vicar for this place (*inter alia*), with an annual stipend of thirty marks, all offerings or oblations and robes, &c. The basework of an ancient cross or dial still exists in the south part of the churchyard. The fishery of Ladypool, close by, was held by Sir Thomas Rouse in the reign of Ed. I.

Shaw,  
Art.,

The following are old Walsall names of this period:—Robert Bonde, Stephen Petyte, John de Beverley, Thomas Mollesley, William Coleson, Henry Flaxale, John Pistor (baker), William de Nottingham (clerk), Geoffrey Attehurst, Thomas le Wrong, Ralph Derre, Alexander de Sweynes, Stephen le Blount (clerk), Ralph Petyt, and Robert of Walsall. We are also entitled to assume, both from their proximity and from the frequency with which, in early records, their names are met with, that Sir Thomas de Darlston, Hugh de Bischbury, Henry and John de Prestwood, and the Heronvilles of Wednesbury were frequent visitors to the town in those days.

From this cursory glance at the Walesale of 1327 we may now pass on and continue the narrative of her domestic history.

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1338-1357.

In 12 Ed. III. (1338-9), Thomas le Rous grants to Rauf Bassett all his tenants, free and native, in Walshale. This charter has been noticed in the history of the manor.

Inq. Post  
Mortem.

An Inquisition taken after the death of Sir Ralph Bassett, in 17 Ed. III. (1343-4), gives some particulars of the place at this time which are worth recording. His possessions included "one chief messuage (the manor house), which is worth nothing by the year beyond the repairs of the dwellings. There is there no dovecote, orchard, curtilage, nor anything of the kind, but there are there two carucates of land in demesne, two parts whereof are worth by the year 40s., and the third part thereof is worth nothing, because it lies fallow and in common. And there are there four acres of meadow worth 4s., the price of the acre 12d. And there is there a certain park to which there is no underwood, because it was entirely cut down before the death of the said Ralph. And there is no pasture of the same on account of the cutting of the said underwood. And there is there a certain water mill which is worth by the year 13s. 4d. of rent of assize of the free and customary tenants beyond the annual rent of £4. £6 19s. 9½d. The pleas and payments of the court are worth by the year 3s. 4d."

Rushall MS.

In 22 Ed. III. (1348-9), the Black Death ravaged Staffordshire, and although we have no record of the havoc which it made here, we yet know that it decimated the country round, and especially the clergy, many of whom died nobly at their posts. Among its victims here was William de Boweles, of Rushale.

From the register of Bishop Norbury, still preserved at Lichfield, we find that in 1357 (31 Ed. III.) the parishioners of Walsall, Yoxall, and other places used to march in Whitsun week to the Cathedral, with banner, and make their offerings there. "They must be content (other bands having noisily interrupted them and caused strife) to go with a simple cross, without banners and quietly, and so

enjoy the Bishop's indulgence." This order was directed to be written in the missal of each parish. In the Patent and other Rolls are various entries relating to this time, and of which the following may be given as an example.

31 Ed. III. (1357-8). The king, at the request of Edward Prince of Wales, pardons Stephen Waltare, of Walshale, the suit of his peace for the death of John le Norman and Thomas de Walshale, slain before September 20 last past, whereof the same Stephen is indicted. Dated August 2, Westminster. In the Rot. Orig., tempo Ed. III., William, son of Ralph Petyt, of Walshale, makes a fine with the king for 20s. to acquire a certain ten. in Bentley. Other records relate to William Coleson, Thomas Packe, &c., and call for no detailed notice.

Among the Vicars' Muniments at Lichfield is a grant to John de Wyrley, clerk, of land, messuages, &c., which formerly belonged to William de Hytton, in the lordships of Walsall, Wyrley, &c. Dated 1368 and 1371. These lands and tenements were held under service of rendering to John Wyrley, clerk, at the Priory of Ronton, on the feasts of the Assumption and Purification, four ells of woollen cloth, good and suitable for his station and of a fast colour. In 1393 this charge was commuted to a money payment of four marks.

In 1392 occurs the name of Joh'es Bloxswich de Walsale as "Master of the Ancient Guild of Lichfield," and at a later period the names of David Tomkyns, Ballie' de Walsale 1490, and Joh'es Sporiar de Walsale 1507, as masters of the same guild.

We have now again to revert to the family of Rushale, which has been already traced to the possession of William de Boweles. This William had issue another William, who had issue another William, who died at Rushale from the Black Death in 1348. His widow, Elizabeth, married William Coleson, and they lived at Rushale, which seems to have been a jointure house, and inhabited at times by more than one family.

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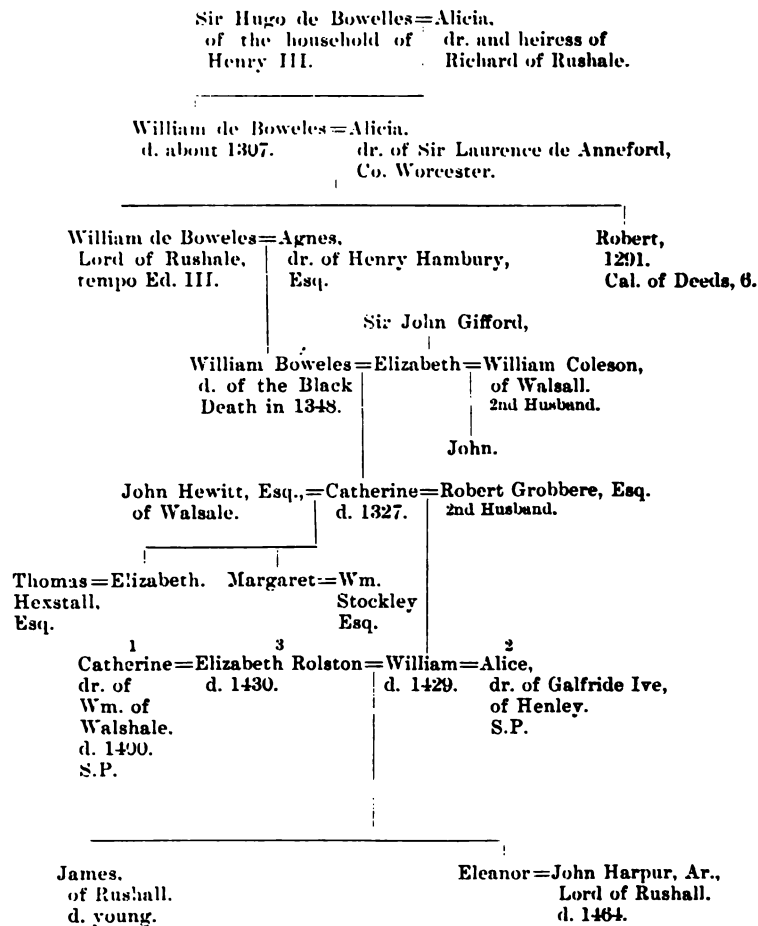
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GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1392.  
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Grasse Fines,  
tempo Ed. III.

They had also a house at Caldewelle (Calder Fields), about which the old MS. of Rushall contains some interesting particulars. John, the son of William Coleson, tempo Ed. III., gives 20s. for leave to acquire certain lands and ten. in Bentley and Walsale.

### FAMILY OF BOWELES OF RUSHALL.



William de Boweles left a daughter and heiress, Katherine, who married John Hewitt, "squier,

dwellinge at Walshale." The arms of Hewet were "Sable, a chevron engrailed between three owls, or."

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1392.

In 47 Ed. III. (1373-4), we find the Dean of Wolverhampton conveying to John Hewitt, of Walsall, in tail general, a dwelling house, 120 acres of arable land, six acres of meadow, 20 acres of pasture, and 200 acres of furze and heath, by the name of all the deanery lands which were at Pelsall, for an annual rent of 16s. 6d., and to be held by service at the dean's great court twice a year. John Hewet left a daughter and heiress, Margaret, who married William Stockley, of Yoxall. Another daughter was married to Thomas Hexstall. "The sayd John Hewit was slain, and Katherine, his widow, was again married, to Robert Grobbere, Esq." Katherine died leaving a little child William, only twelve months old, and the Manor of Rushale was seized by Henry de Bushbury, who appears to have held it by the fourth part of a knight's fee. Robert Grobbere still, however, maintained his interest, and held it in wardship for his son William, heir to the double jointure of his mother and his grandmother. During the nonage of William Grobbere his wardship and marriage were bought by William Coleson. Subsequently he sold them to William Walshale, his nephew. "And the seyde William Walshale dwellide at Rushale from anno tercio of Kynge Richard (1379-80) to anno decimo of Kynge Richard, in the nonage of the seyde William of Rushale. And the seyde William of Rushale hadde issue two childryn by his wyf Katherine. And his fadir in lawe, William Walshale, broghte his son William Rushale into the service of the kynge, and was maad gentilman usher of Kynge Richard's halle. And the seyde William Rushale was with Kynge Richard at his journey that he made last into Irelande. And the seyde William Walshale was a thryftie squyre and one of the marshalles of Kynge Richard's halle of gret power by the Kynge's autoritee. And the seyde William Walshale married the seyde William Grobbere to his doghter Kateryn. And bycause the seyde

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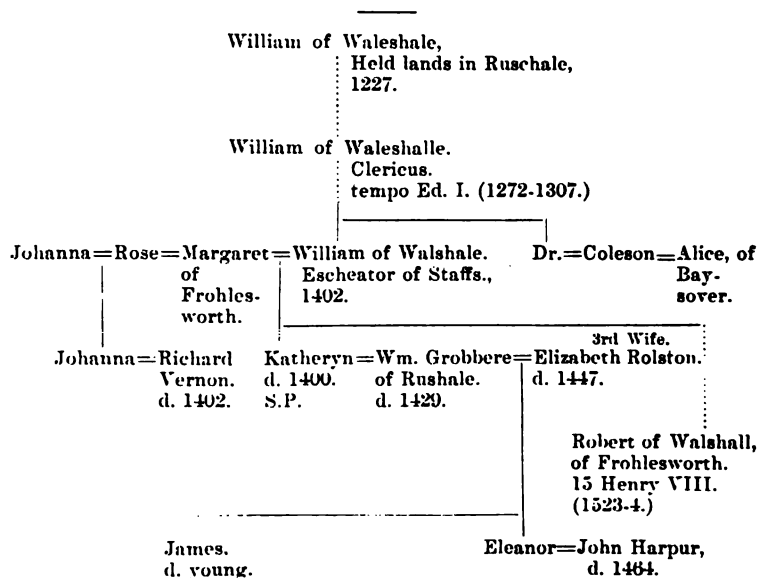
Rushall MS.



GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1392.  
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William Grobbere was lord of Rushale, the seyd William Walshale uside to calle him William of Rushale, and so al the cuntre usyde to calle him." An old MS. of this date states that this "William Grobbeior bilt hym a verie prattie littil house of woode, and hadde inn it severall picturs of famous kynges and quenes and of hystoricall subjes from various partes of the worlde. But a dreadful fire burnt bothe the littil wouden chamber bilded for theyre reception and care and al the pictures but four, whyche were preservede altho muche damaged bi the water." The rest of this quaint MS. narrates the grief of William Grobbere at the loss of his valuable collection, which he had amassed at great cost and pains, and to see which people came from great distances. The surviving pictures he gave to his friend, and afterwards son-in-law, Sir John Harpur, married to his daughter Eleanor, who "hadde welnye beene burnte to deathe in the littil picture house."

### PEDIGREE OF WILLIAM OF WALESHALE.



William of Walshale represented an old family, for in 12 Henry III. (1227), one of the same name held the mill in Ruschale, and in a document of the time of Ed. I., William Walleshale is described as "Clerk." His namesake or descendant, here mentioned, was Sheriff of Staffordshire seven times in the reign of Richard II., and again in that of Henry IV.

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1392.

Plea Roll.

In 21 Richard II. (1397-8), the king grants to William Walshale, Ar., for life, the custody of the Hay of Teddesley, within the Forest of Cannock, and also the herbage, pannage, waifs and strays, and windfalls in the same. In 49 Ed. III. (1375-6), and in 4 and 5 Henry IV., he was escheator for the king for the county. In 7 Henry IV. (1405-6), William Walshalle signs a deed at Darlaston; and from another undated record we learn that he had an annuity of £20 saved to him out of the alien Priory of Lappeley, in recompense of a grant of the herbage and pannage of Delemere Forest. He married Margaret, and in "Burton's Leicestershire" (p. 103), he is described as of Frohlesworth, in the right of his wife, in 1426-7. In confirmation of this, we find that Robert of Walshall was seated at Frohlesworth in 15 Henry VIII. (1523-4.) On April 1st, 1414, William Walshale held Stockton, Warwick, Tunstall, &c.

Patent Roll.

Rolls of  
Parliament.

Shaw, v. i.  
App. p. 38.

Having, in 1400, lost his wife, Katherine, William Grobbere married again, "by the avyse and counsel of William Walshale," Alice, daughter of Geoffrey Ive, of Hanley, co. Warwick. This Geoffrey, according to the old MS., pulled down the old hall at Rushale about the year 1405. It is conjectured to have been an embattled house, of old red sandstone, surrounded by a wall and a moat. This latter has been filled up, but a postern gate and an archway still testify to the early character and date of the building. Most of the present structure was erected by William Grobbere, at this time. The gateway is fairly complete, with the remains of two rooms

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1392.

over it, with fire places, and in front the coat of arms of le Harpur: argent, a lion rampant, gules, within a bordure engrailed, sable—the old escutcheon of the Rushalls. The area covered by the buildings was about an acre, and foundations have been dug up in various directions showing that its extent was formerly much greater than is at present apparent. The “littil wouden chamber” stood probably in the centre of the courtyard, and here up to a recent period stood a detached building containing a large room on the ground floor and a bedchamber over it, adorned with several family portraits of the Leighs. Round the court were buildings with lean-to roofs and fireplaces, for the attendants, and in time of war for the garrison. Leland, writing about 1540, describes this ancient mansion as built about with a wall and a gatehouse of stone, all embattled castlewise. The defences were possibly strengthened during the troublous times which preceded and accompanied the wars of the Roses, and tradition relates that it was then strongly fortified in the Lancastrian cause.

Rushall MS.

By a third wife, Elizabeth Rolston, who died in 1447, William Grobbere had a son, James of Rushale, who died young, and a daughter, Eleanor, who married John Harpur, of Chesterton, co. Warwick. He thus became lord of Rushale, and died in 1464. John Harpur was steward of Weston-upon-Trent in 1443, and the Charter Rolls state that he had “free warren at Rushale, and also view of frankpledge in Rushale and Goscote.” He endowed the vicarage of Rushale, and rebuilt the church about the year 1444, for which he appears to have been styled by the Bishop of Coventry “virum probum et honorabilem.” The Rushall MS. contains some quaint lines by this John Harper, and also the following obit: “Here on the 3rd July, 1464, died John Harper, Esq., and lord of Russhale, between the seventh and eighth hour after the ninth (*i.e.*, three hours before sunset), on whose soul may God have mercy.” He was buried in the Grey Friars at Lichfield, where was an epitaph similar

to the above. Branches of the Harpur family were also settled at Swarleston and Calke, co. Derby.

In 1423 much commotion was occasioned by the preaching of an anchorite friar named John Grace, who came out of his cell and preached five days together in the "lytull park" at Coventry, "saying that he was licentiate and licensed to preche of the bishop's minystrers of this diocese; and he had preched at Lichfield there in the Close among the canons three daies together; and after he preched at Burmingham, and after at Wallsall, and after yt at Cottysnull, and so come down hither; the which John Grace was at that time a famous man among the people." He was opposed by the Prior of St. Mary's and a Grey Friar, who said that he was unlicensed to preach, and he seems to have narrowly escaped death at the hands of the mob at Lichfield, in 1425.

GENERAL  
HISTORY  
1392-1423.

Diocesan Hist.  
of Lichfield,  
p. 151.

We must now proceed to notice that old and very curious custom called "Moseley's Dole," which had its origin about this time, and which for a period of nearly 400 years (only interrupted by the temporary seizure of the estate by the Crown), down to the year 1825, retained a place in the catalogue of Walsall observances. The early history of the Bascote estate, from which this dole was derived, together with its intricate connection with the Corporation, has been already examined. It now remains to consider its legendary origin, and to follow the fortunes of the dole itself.

pp. 176, 177.

This dole consisted in the distribution on Twelfth Night Eve of one penny to every man, woman and child in the parish of Walsall and also of Rushall, which latter it has been surmised was anciently a part of the same parish. The distribution was originally made by the Sergeants at Mace, who visited every house, and enquiring the number of the inhabitants, delivered to them so many pence, reserving an equal number for the Court Leet. The dole was given alike to strangers as well as residents. At a subsequent date three persons were specially appointed, and they commenced their visitation on New Year's Day instead of Twelfth Night Eve.

Plot, p. 314

Shaw, v. ii,  
App. p. 15

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1423.  
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Plot, p. 314.

There is much obscurity with regard to the real origin of this singular custom. One tradition relates that a gentleman named Thomas Mollesley, while once riding through Walsall on Twelfth Night Eve, heard a child cry for bread, and being impressed by this circumstance, settled upon the town his Manor of Bascote, near Offchurch, in Warwickshire, in order to prevent a like occurrence in future. Plot states that Thomas Mollesley, in 1452, granted his Manor of Bascote for performing annually an obit for the souls of himself and his wife in the church of Walsall and in the abbey of Hales Owen, and in support of this he says that on the evening of Twelfth Day the bellman summoned the people to repair to the church to pray for the souls of Thomas Mollesley and Margaret his wife, a dole being given at the same time.

The inferences to be deduced from a consideration of these conflicting statements appears to be that the bequest was originally divided, part of the estate being devoted to the maintenance of the chantry and of an obit for the souls of Mollesley and his wife, and the remainder for charitable purposes. The Reformation, however, prevented the feoffees from openly applying the income in masses for the souls of the donor and his wife, and they accordingly gave the penny dole, with the implied understanding that each recipient should pray for the souls of the deceased. The Corporation, who eventually gained possession of the estate, continued the custom, in compliance with the popular desire. The estate, says Plot, was subsequently seized by the Crown as being devoted to superstitious usages, and here it remained until the 28th of Elizabeth, being still rented by the town for the use of the dole. The evidence on this point is, however, far from being conclusive.

Nowell's  
Survey, 1659.

In 30 Henry VIII. (1538-9), Thomas Nowell, one of the masters of the Guild of St. John, claimed allowance of 13s. 4d. on his account for the dole, paid to Sir John Dudley, possessor of the ecclesiastical rights of the Monastery of Hales Owen, to procure an

anniversary by the religious men of the Monastery for the souls of Thomas Moseley and his wife. He also claimed 15s. 4d. for the same in Walsall Church.

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1460.

Much dissatisfaction having from time to time arisen regarding the dole and its charitable intents, it was made the subject of a public enquiry in 1823, the result of which was that the custom was abolished, and in 1825 a row of eleven almshouses was built in Bath Street for necessitous widows, five for Walsall Borough, five for the Foreign, and one for Rushall. A sum of two shillings per week, recently augmented to three shillings, is still paid to each of the inmates out of the general borough funds. The amount of the dole increased, of course, with the population. In 1539 it was £7 10s. 9d.; in 1652 £14 9s. 4d.; and in 1799 it had reached the sum of £60. The dole appears to have been much valued by the townsfolk, for we learn that about 1770, on an attempt being made by the Corporation to withhold it, "an enraged populace clamorously forced its continuance," and again, when in the year 1824 the Corporation finally decided to discontinue it, there was considerable disturbances, the walls being placarded, and the authorities being subjected to a good deal of scurrilous abuse.

Town Records.

In 1460 Nicholas Levison, Esq., had twenty pounds granted him by King Henry VI., out of the demesnes of Walsall, &c., for the losses he had sustained at Black Heath and Blore Heath (1459), "at the last of which places he was stripped and left for dead." This Nicholas Levison was, I think, of the Lilleshall family. A namesake was Sheriff of London in 1534, and afterwards Lord Mayor, whilst from his brother James descended the Leveson-Gowers. In the Survey of Walsall Manor, taken in 1617, we meet with frequent mention of the name of Sir Walter Leveson as lately holding land, burgages, &c. Sir Walter died in 1602. He married Susan Vernon, by whom he had a son, Sir Richard Leveson, who became Vice-Admiral of England.

Huntbach MS.,  
No. 2, p. 57.

Erlswick, p.

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1460-1502.

Another member of this family was Sir Thomas, who was Governor of Dudley Castle during the Civil War, and with whom we shall meet on a future page.

Of the internal history of the town at this time we can glean but little, save what relates to the manor and the church.

Shaw, v. ii.

The population in 1498 was computed at 1,809, an estimate for which I find no reliable authority. That of Birmingham at the same time was about 4,500, thus shewing that in point of numbers, if indeed they approximate to the truth, the latter town was already far ahead of the former. For those who still entertain the belief that "Birmingham, near Walsall," was formerly a smaller and less important town than our own, it may be here stated that the converse is the fact, and that from the earliest times Birmingham, though not an ancient corporate town was, so far as size and population are concerned, as large if not the larger of the two.

Hutton, "Hist.  
of Birmingham," p. 77.

Calendar of  
Deeds, 83.

A curious and interesting record belonging to the year 1502 is contained in the Town Chest, and has already been alluded to. By various local authors it has been assigned to the year 1496, and this has given rise to a suspicion that it was lost. It is, however, identical with the one numbered 83 in the Walsall Calendar, and is dated June 10th, 1502. The title of this document is "Letters of John Arundell, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, granted at the solicitation of William Marshall, Mayor of Walsall, and William Parker, and John Dudley, wardens or masters of the arts of Drapers and Tailors, together with the 'shearmen, wevers, coopers and barburs dwellyng in Walsale,'" approving of and confirming certain Statutes and Ordinances for the government of their college. Provision is made for the protection of their united crafts as connected with the church and chapel of 'Seynt Kateryn' therein, with certain items of fine, forfeit, and order of subscription to the church, chapel, and craft in

general. The Arundell escutcheon quarterly is at the lower portion of the subject, whilst part of the seal in red wax still remains attached, and across the seal tie is written: "Syn ys call [seneschal] de Walsall, Humfrey Stanley." The document ordains—

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"That no man of the craftys above specified shall sett up nee occupie any of the seide craftys within the Towne or p̄resh of Walsale, except he pay to mayntayne the chapell of Seynt Kateryn, with all honorments to the seyd chapell apperteyneng, and the light of Seynt Anne, within parte of the church of Walsale, 6s.8d.

"ITEM.—Ther shall noo man be free in the seide craftt or eny of them, except he have bene prentyce within the seide towne or p̄resh, or ells borne in the seide towne or p̄resh, and if ony man worke contrarie to this ordinaunce, the Warden shall warne him to leve, and if he will not leave by that warning, the Warden shall take a distresse of him, and make levy of the same sircss to maynteyne the reservations above seyd.

"ITEM.—They shall kepe ther drinkyng four tymes in the year, and evry man to pay one penny at evry drinkyng and he that is absent at ony of those drinkyngs to sende his money, or ells to forfeit a pound of wex to the light of the chapel aforesaide.

"ITEM.—The Warden of every craft above named shall make a true accompts be fore the Meyre ones in the yere, that is to wyte, on Seynt Clements or ells Seynt Kateryn's day, and if ony warden be away at ony of those dayes tell he be discharged of his accompts, to forfeit to the Burges Box at every time . . . . 6s.8d.

"ITEM.—The Wardens shall cause the priests to geve monycyon bothe in the church of Walsale and in the chapel of Bloxwich six dayes before every drinking, and if the Wardens at ony tyme cause not this monycyon to be made, they to forfeit at every time a pound of wex to the chapel above rehersed.

"ITEM.—Ther shall none of the seide crafts sue a nother in spirituall lawe, nee temporall, till he have shewed his mater to the Wardens of his craftt, upon payne of a pound of wex."

Bishop John Arundell, who grants this decree, was consecrated in September, 1496, and translated to the See of Exeter in 1506. He completed the library at Lichfield, commenced by Dean Heywood.

In the 11th Henry VIII. (1519-20), John Harpur, of Rushall, founded and endowed the almshouses in Dudley Street, which bear his name, and which were rebuilt in 1793. This was, it would appear, in obedience to the will of his father, and Shaw

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p. 1

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GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1520-1567.

remarks: "William Harper, of Rushall, Esq., proposed to establish an almshouse for four poore men at Walsal, which will his son John fulfilled, who was a Knight of the Sepulchra."

Itinerary, v. iii,  
p. 29.

Somewhere about the year 1540 the town was visited by that learned antiquary Leland, and he has left us the following quaint description: "Waulleshal, a little Market Towne in Stafordshir, a mile by north from Weddesbyrie. Ther be many Smithes and Bytte makers yn the Towne. It longgith now to the King, and there is a Parke of that name scant half a mile from the Towne, yn the way to Wolverhampton. At Walleshaul be Pittes of Se Cole, Pyttes of Lyme, that serve also South Town [Sutton Coldfield,] 4 miles off."

Salt Library.

Another nearly contemporary but strangely incorrect description may also be recorded here. The author is uncertain, but was probably Wyrley, writing towards the close of the sixteenth century: "Walsale is a fayre village, and although it inivyneth (enjoyeth) a maior and priviledges, yet it hath no market, but in it be good store of lorrimers, making bridle bitts, spurs, and such like. This town was sometime belonging to the familie of Hyllarie, but nowe doth acknowledge for lord Th. Wilbrome, of Woodhey, in co. Chester, Esquier; near unto this is the head of Thame, and in the church be these armes." Some drawings of the latter then follow.

Britannia, v. i,  
p. 635.

Camden, writing about the year 1600, remarks that "Walsall is none of the meanest of market towns."

Hist. of Tam-  
worth Church,  
p. 55.

In 1567 the search after withheld and concealed church property was eagerly pursued by adventurers, who carried on their quest throughout the whole country. One of these, Robert Hudleston, claimed a reward from the queen, for his industry in finding some houses and lands at his own trouble and expense in Tamworth, Bloxwich, Walsall, and other places, worth altogether £3 10s. 8d. a year. As a recognition of his discoveries he received, in July of this

same year, a lease of all he had found, for twenty-one years, at the same rents as then existed.

In the Town Chest is a copy of Letters Patent, dated 1583, from Queen Elizabeth, granting authority to Sir James Crofte, Knt., Comptroller of the Household, to search for concealed lands during a period of four years.

In November, 1585, Sir Amyas Powlett came on a visit to Rushall, then the abode of Edward Leigh, to whose ancestors it had passed by marriage with a heiress of one of the Harpers. This Edward Leigh was grandfather of the illustrious author of the "Critica Sacra." The visit of Sir Amyas was for the purpose of inspecting and reporting upon Dudley Castle, as a prospective prison for Mary Queen of Scots, who was then in confinement at Tutbury. His report, addressed from Rushall to Sir Francis Walsingham, Her Majesty's secretary, was unfavourable, and the captive queen was accordingly removed to Chartley.

A document dated 1597 is worthy of notice. It is a sale by William Webb, Mayor of Walsall, and others, of land, &c., at Great Bloxwich, to George Whitehall of the same. The latter covenants "to serve all the inhabitants of Walsall with coals, called 'dassell coalles,' at the rate of 3d. for each 'horse, mare, or gelding' load, and with others called 'bagge coalles,' at 2d. per like load, and to refuse none so long as there be any coals 'upon the bancke,' " &c.

During the reign of Elizabeth various local suits are recorded in the "Proceedings in Chancery," and the following may be taken for a typical specimen: "Plaintiff, William Holmer, for himself and John, Margaret, and Johan, his three children. Defendant, Ralph Tuncks. Object, claims under a will, a close of land in the parish and lordship of Walsall, held by Johan Bromhall, widow, the testatrix for a term of years." These suits are not of general interest, and need not be more fully considered.

GENERAL  
HISTORY.

1567-1597.

Calendar of  
Deeds, 125.

Townley,  
"Hist. of Dud-  
ley Castle,"  
p. 36.

State Papers.

Calendar of  
Deeds, 144.

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1605-1614.  
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Langford,  
"Stafford-  
shire," p. 113.

Recusant Roll.

Salt Collection.  
v. v, pt. 2,  
p. 338.

Lawley,  
"Hist. of  
Wolverhampton."

In the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, Staffordshire was much interested. The conspirators fled to Holbeach House, the residence of Stephen Littleton, and here they were attacked and some of them captured. On November 9th, 1605, Sir Edward Leigh wrote to the Council from Rushall, giving an account of the proceedings in Staffordshire, and of the attack on Holbeach House, where the conspirators sought refuge, and offered a most stubborn resistance. Sir Edward states that the two Wrights were not killed, as was reported, but that they were wounded. On their way to Holbeach the conspirators asked all those they met to join them, but they seem to have met with little response.

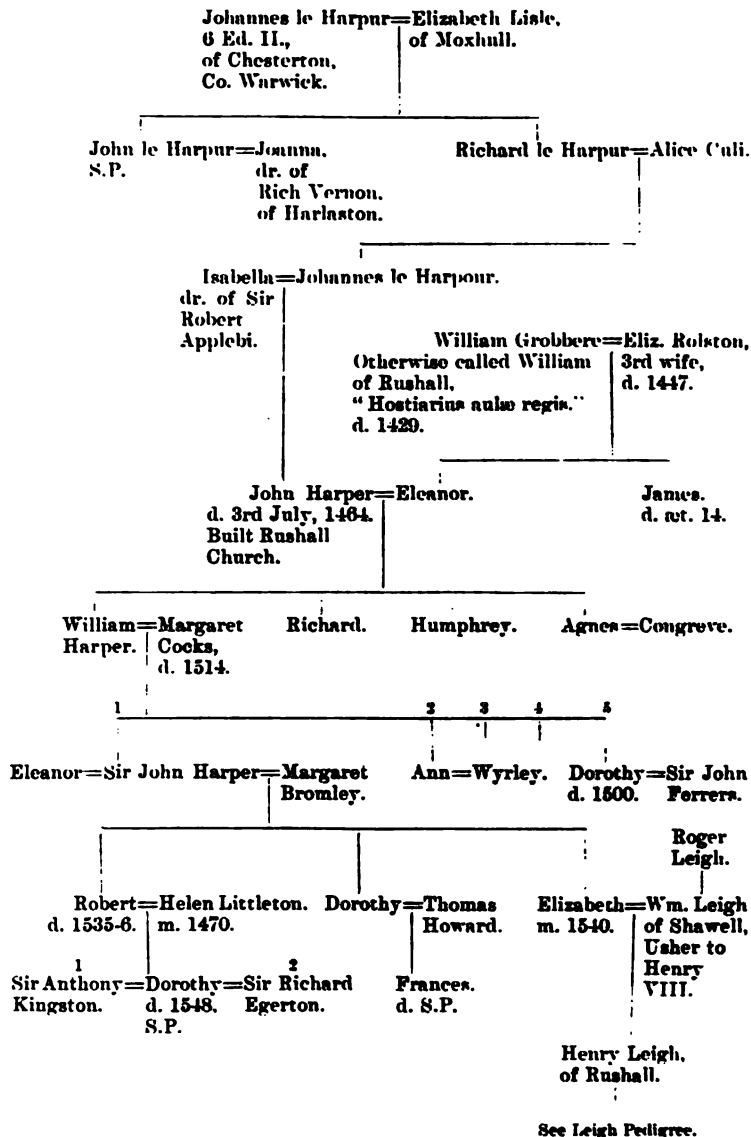
Among the list of recusants in 1609, is the name of Robert Gorway, of Walson, and in 1640, that of Symon Mountfort, of Bescot.

In the "Visitation of Staffordshire," in 1614, are to be found the following local names: Sir Ed. Leigh, of Rushall, Knt.; Sir Ed. Montfort, of Bescott, Knt.; Mr. Lane, of Bentley; Mr. Parshouse, of Wallshall; Mr. Wollaston, of Wallshall; Mr. Hale, of Wallshall; and Mr. Lydyate, of Wallshall.

The Leighs of Rushall were a somewhat remarkable family, and from their subsequent history demand a brief notice. They had become possessed of Rushall, as already stated, by marriage with the heiress of one of the Harpurs, of which latter family we must first say a few words.

John Harpur, the husband of Eleanor Grobbere, died in 1464, and during the last years of his life the struggle took place between the rival houses of York and Lancaster, a contest that raged nowhere more fiercely than in this part of the country, and tradition relates that Rushall was then defended by a Lancastrian garrison. The only definite records now left are of a group of Yorkists occupying Barr Beacon, and of a grant given by Henry VI., of £20, to Nicholas Levison, for the losses he had sustained at Blore Heath, "at which place he was stripped and left for dead."

## PEDIGREE OF HARPUR OF RUSHALL.

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1614.

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1614.  
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We learn also of some of the brethren of the Guild of St. John being slain on the fatal field of Shrewsbury, where they espoused the cause of the Royalists. It seems highly probable that a stronghold like Rushall did take an active part in the stirring events of that day, and that its leaning would be towards the side of the Lancastrians.

See page 173.

Enslwick,  
p. 209.

William Harpur, who next became Lord of Rushall, married Margaret, daughter and heiress of Henry Cocks, of Littlebourne. She died in 1514, leaving a son, Sir John Harpur, Knt., who married Margaret, heiress of John Bromley, of Badington, by whom he had issue Robert Harper, Dorothy, and Elizabeth. Robert died in 27 Henry VIII. (1535-6), and left issue Dorothy, who married first Sir Anthony Kingston, of Misterden, Gloucestershire, and secondly Sir Richard Egerton, of Redley, in Cheshire. She left no issue, and Rushall came finally to her two aunts, of whom Elizabeth married, in 1540, William Leigh, of Shawell, in Leicestershire, a son of Roger Leigh, of Wellington, and a brother of Sir Thomas Leigh, Lord Mayor of London, ancestor of the Leighs of Stoneleigh. Roger Leigh himself was a descendant of John Leigh, of the Ridge in Cheshire. Several of this family were famous, and may now be fitly noticed.

Peerage.

The Leighs assumed their name from the township of High Leigh, in Cheshire, where they were seated before the Conquest. Sir Piers Leigh, a descendant, was beheaded in 1399, by order of the Duke of Lancaster, for his adherence to King Richard. Roger Leigh, who lived tempo Henry VIII., had several sons, the youngest of whom was Sir Thomas Leigh, Lord Mayor of London in 1558. The eldest brother of this Sir Thomas was William Leigh, of Wellington, in Shropshire, and Shawell, in Leicestershire, who married, in 1540, the daughter and sole heiress of John Harper, of Rushall.

William Leigh was gentleman "huisher" to King Henry VIII., and had a son Henry, who was godchild

to the king, and as an old chronicle relates, "died out of his witts." He it was who purchased the Rectory of Walsall from Robert Balthrope, of the city of London, in the year 1590, which rectory he conveyed to his cousin, named Manwaring and his cousin Shelton to raise portions for his younger children.

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1614.  
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His son, Sir Edward Leigh, was Member of Parliament for Staffordshire in 1585, and was created a knight in 1589. He was Sheriff of Leicestershire in 1573, and of Staffordshire in 1583, 1602, and 1603, and as before stated, is notable for having sent up an account of the fight at Holbeach House, and the capture of the Gunpowder Plot conspirators. His name occurs in the Calendar of Deeds, and in a scarce book giving the names of those who contributed to the defence of the country at the time of the Spanish invasion of 1588, is the name of Edward Leigh, Esq., of Rushall, as being a donor of £25. Sir Edward Leigh died at Rushall in 1617, and was succeeded by his eldest surviving son Henry, who was Sheriff of Staffordshire in 1621. He was twice married, first to Anne, eldest daughter of Anthony Leslie, by whom he had two sons and two daughters. His second wife was Ruth Scudamore, whose only son Samuel died in 1651, and was buried at Rushall. From this Samuel descended Samuel Leigh, of Aldridge, who left two sons, one of whom was Vicar of Shenstone; the other married a Featherstone, and lived at Packwood, Warwickshire. Henry Leigh died at Sutton Coldfield in December, 1630, and was buried in Rushall Church. His eldest son Richard was unmarried, and died before his father, in the ill-fated expedition to the Isle of Rhe, on November 6th, 1627.

Shaw, v. i.  
p. xxxviii.

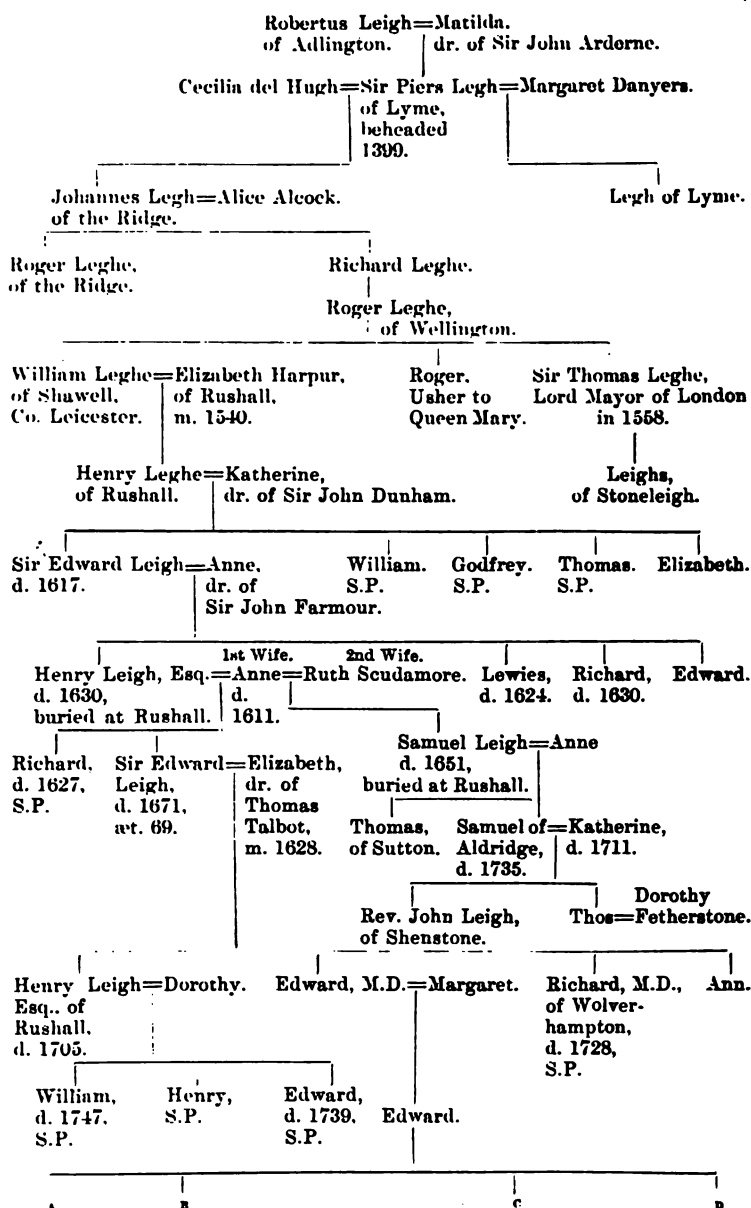
Erdswick,  
p. 300.

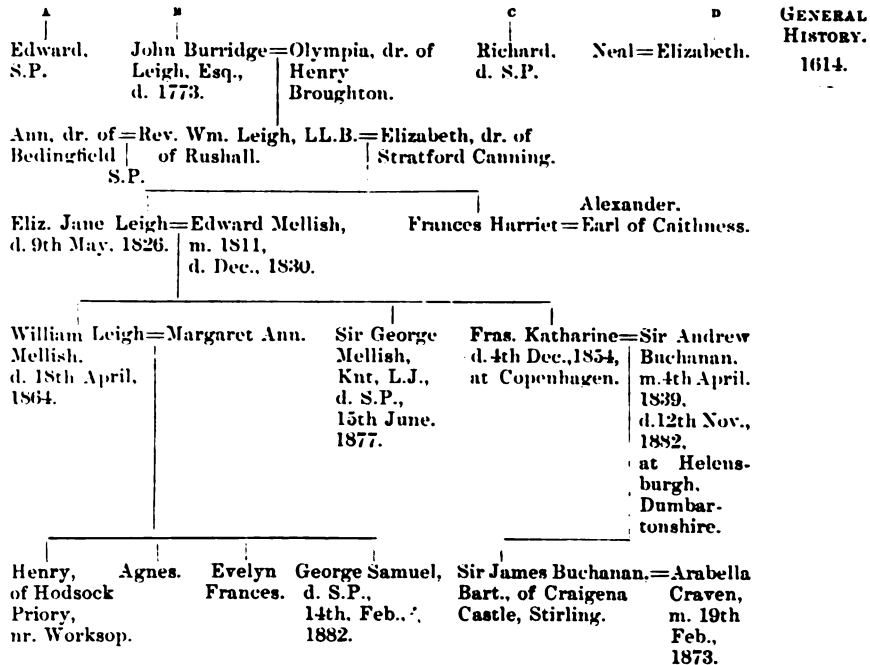
Finch Smith,  
Aldridge  
Registers,  
pp. 20, 21.

Pict. History,  
v. iii, p. 126.

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1614.

# PEDIGREE OF LEIGH OF RUSHALL.





[The surviving children of the late William Leigh Mellish, the trustees of the will of the late Sir George Mellish, and Sir James Buchanan are now the owners of the Rushall estate.]

Edward Leigh, author of the "Critica Sacra," was his next and more remarkable brother, and now became heir to Rushall. He was born at Shawell, near Lutterworth, on March 23rd, 1603; was educated at Magdalen College, Oxford, where he remained six or seven years, and where, in 1623, he took his degree of M.A., becoming finally the head of his college. He afterwards removed to the Middle Temple in London, where he practised as a lawyer, and devoted his leisure to literature. On the death of his father in 1630, he succeeded to the title and estates. Previously to this he appears to have been residing at Rushall, for in 1629 he was imprisoned by the authorities for playing at bowls 'at Bloxwich.' In the Town Chest is a copy of the pleadings in an action brought by Edward Leigh, gent., against Henry Stone,



GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1614.

Calendar of  
Deeds, 210.

Hist. of  
Banbury,  
p. 402.

gent., Mayor of Walsall, William Webb, and others, for false imprisonment on June 18th, 1629. The copy states that "Mr. Henry Stone being Mayor did imprison Mr. Leighe for playing at Bowles in an open green at Bloxwich, by means whereof divers poor men were drawne thither, and upon triall thereof at Wolverhampton Assizes, holden the 18th March, 1630 (5 Chas. I.), upon full evidence the plaintiff was nonsuited, for that the judge was of opinion there was nothing done but what might be justified by the Stat. 33 Henry VIII. against unlawfull games." Soon after this he became a resident at Banbury, in consequence of his deep admiration of the then Vicar, William Whateley, but he dying in 1639, Sir Edward returned to live in London, where he took a prominent part in the occurrences of the time. Some of his children appear to have been born at Banbury. His first attempt at authorship was in 1633, when he published "A Treatise of Divine Promises." His next work was "Select and Chronic Observations concerning the first twelve Cæsars." A second edition of this book, entitled "Analecta Cæsarum Romanorum," was brought out in 1657, with additions by himself and his son Henry, surnamed by Plot "the learned." This work was afterwards enlarged, and ran through two other editions. But the most famous work, and the one by which he is best known, is the "Critica Sacra," or the Hebrew words of the Old and the Greek Words of the New Testament. This was first published in 1639, and was followed by many other editions. The best English version appeared in 1662; it is in folio, and is augmented by a Supplement. The value of this work is shewn by the fact that it was translated into several foreign languages. An edition in Latin, by Henry A. Middock, was produced at Amsterdam in 1670, and is prefixed by a fine portrait bearing the inscription, "The lively portrayture of the truely pious, learned, and judicious gentleman Edward Leigh, Esq., M. of Arts of Magdalen Coll.: Oxford." Another portrait, taken at the age of 60,

is engraved in an edition also published in Amsterdam in 1679. The Hebrew portion of the "Critica Sacra" was translated into French in 1703 by Louie de Wolzogue, a Gronningen Professor, while a new supplement was added to the Latin version in 1713 by J. J. Seroclius, and printed at Copenhagen. The work itself is in two parts. The first contains all the Hebrew radicles of the Old Testament in alphabetical order, with observations upon them partly original and partly selected. The second part contains the Greek words of the New Testament. The value of the work to Biblical scholars in the past is best exemplified by the criticisms they have made upon it. Horne considered it "a very valuable help to the understanding of the original languages of the sacred writings. The 'Critica Sacra' not only gives the literal sense of every word in the Old and New Testament, but enriches almost every definition with philological and theological notes drawn from the publications of the best grammarians and critics then extant." To this work most succeeding lexicographers on the Old and New Testament have been greatly indebted. Dr. William Gouge, C. B. Williams, worthy old Fuller, and Hallam in his "Literary History of Europe," besides many others too numerous to mention, have all written in praise of this book, which appears at that time to have been a standard work of reference, and very highly valued by the scholar and divine of the period.

GENE  
HIST  
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The influence of the writings of Sir Edward Leigh on Biblical subjects, led to his being appointed in 1643 one of the lay members of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, where, says Wood, "he behaved himself as learnedly as most of the divines then sitting."

Hist. of  
stone, 1

Besides the works already mentioned, we may make mention of several others. "A Treatise of Divinity," published in 1646; "Annotations on the New Testament," 1650; "A System or Body of Divinity and Annotations on the Poetical Books of the

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1614.  
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Old Testament." Plot cites as an authority a book entitled "England Described, or the severall Counties and Shires thereof briefly handled," by Edward Leigh, M.A., from which the following is taken: "Walsall, a little Mercat Town a mile by north by Weddesbury. There are many smiths, peuterers, and Bit-makers. There is a Park of that name half a mile from the Town. There are many Lime Pits near the Town." The date of this book is May, 1659.

Sir Edward is also reputed to have written various other books on legal subjects, the names of which have been lost. Sufficient has, however, been said to show that as an author he was not only learned but voluminous, considering the great difficulties which in his time surrounded the composition and publication of books, and also that his life at this period was closely intermingled with stirring political events in which he took a prominent part. One of his descendants has left to us the following kindly criticism of his character: "He published divers useful books, and by his other carriage he got a good name in the church of God, and also among the learned and virtuosi. He showed so great skill in languages that Archbishop Usher had a great respect and kindness for him."

On the death of Sir Edward Leigh, in 1671, his eldest son, Henry, became Lord of the Manor of Rushall. He was a man of education and talent, for he re-edited some of his father's books, and is described by Plot as "the learned Henry Leigh, Esq." He married Dorothy, daughter of William Andrews, of Lathbury, Bucks. His two younger brothers, Edward and Richard Leigh, were both M.D.'s. The latter settled in Wolverhampton, where he died in 1728. He is mentioned by Wood as "having Poetry and other things extant," this meaning in plain English that he was a literary man. Edward, his brother, left a son of his own name, who became ultimately heir to the estate.

Hist. of En-  
stone, p. 74.

Henry Leigh died in 1705, and was buried in

Rushall Church. He left several children, of whom William, the eldest, succeeded him, but died without issue in 1747. Rushall now came by default of other male issue to Edward, son of Edward Leigh, M.D., whose son, Edward, dying childless, the estate came to John Burridge Leigh, Esq., married to Olympia, daughter of Henry Houghton, of Ongar, Essex. This J. B. Leigh was Sheriff of Staffordshire in 1754. He died in 1773, and was succeeded by his son, the Rev. William Leigh, LL.B., who was born in 1752 at Rushall. He was Dean of Hereford, and was twice married. By his first wife, Anne, he left a daughter, who died young. By his second wife, Elizabeth, he left two daughters, Elizabeth Jane, who married the Rev. Edward Mellish, and Frances Harriet, who became Countess of Caithness.

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We now approach the stormy strife of the Civil War, in which both Walsall and Rushall Hall played a prominent part, but before passing on to this period of our history we may as well notice two or three matters which closely preceded it.

From an entry in the Churchwardens' Accounts of St. Mary, at Lichfield, we learn that in 1634 "the great bell was cast by Thomas Clibury, Richard Clibury, and Thomas Hancox, at Walsall." The new metal cost £5 10s. 0d., and they were paid for the casting £9. This entry is interesting as shewing the existence of bell casters in the town at this time.

Harv  
"v.  
p.

An extract, given by Mr. H. H. McConnell, from the Liverpool Records, refers to three bells which had been cast about 1629, and being "altogether disonante in disagreeinge" to the first bell, an agreement was made in 1636 with "one Thomas Hancock, of Walsall, bellfounder, to alter and change the said bells for four others." Richard and Thomas Hancoxe were braziers and potters, and their place of business was "a building called the Pott-house, in the Parke Streete, between the same streete and the common field of Walsall, called the Wysemore."

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GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1635-1636.  
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Calendar of  
Deeds, 227.

In 1635 the unpopular tax known as ship money was levied upon all counties and corporations in England and Wales. The amount of money wanted was £218,800, and the number of ships to be equipped was forty-five. Staffordshire was assessed at £2,000, of which Lichfield was asked to contribute £150; Stafford £30; Newcastle-under-Lyme £20; and Walsall £32. In many places great difficulty was experienced in getting the money, and petitions on the subject were very numerous. The original writ for Walsall is still preserved in the Town Chest, and is addressed (amongst others) to "the Mayor and Commonalty of the Borough and Forren of Walsall." It is in Latin, and is dated 12th August, 12 Chas. I. (1636-7). The writ is accompanied by a paper of instructions to the High Sheriff, explaining his duty as to how much he was to collect from the several towns, &c.

Another curious warrant (now missing) was granted at the Sessions, in November, 1636, "against divers persons for not attending church." It runs as follows:

TO THE CONSTABLE AND CHURCHWARDENS OF WALSALL  
BOROUGHE.

"These are to will and require you, and in his Majesties name to charge and command you, that you levie of the severall psons undernamed the severall sums of money imposed upon them for their severall offences after mentioned, in which they are severally convicted before us at ye Sessions held at Walsall, the eighth day of November, 1636. Given under our hands and scales ye tenth day of ye sayd November, Anno ante dicto."

Then comes a series of names and fines, of which the following is a fair example: "of Richard Stone, Lorymore (bridle bit maker), for his absence from churche Three Sabboath Dayes together, iiis." His wife and fourteen others are convicted of the same offence. Penalties are also enforced "for selling ale without lycence;" "for suffering divers psons to continue tipling and drinke in evening prayer time, on the Sabbath Day," and on John Smyth, of "ye Windmill field gate," for suffering "drinke in

his house on ye Sabbath Day, in the time of evening prayer." In case of the non-payment of the various fines the constable is directed, "if noe distres existed whereon to levie the same, to commit the defaulter to gaol," or in the case of those offending against the licencing laws, to commit them to "ye stockes, ther to remaine by the space of four houres." The money thus received was employed for the use of "ye poore of the parishe."

GENI  
HIST  
1636.  
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In 1637 the country was visited for the eleventh time by an epidemic of the plague, which from contemporary accounts seems to have played sad havoc in this neighbourhood on several occasions. Thus we learn that in 1593, 1,000 people died in Lichfield; and in 1646, 821 died there from the same complaint. Tamworth also suffered very severely. The old register of St. Matthew's Church contains numerous entries of death from the plague, and shows that in the year 1603 the disease must have been very prevalent in the town.

Harwood  
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In June, 1637, the following mandate was issued by the Walsall authorities:—

#### TO THE CONSTABLE OF WALLSALL BURROWE.

"Whereas the infection of the plague is dispersed into divers parts of this kingdome, by reason whereof it is verie dangerous to permit strange passengers to stay or abide in our Towne these are therefore to require you that imedyatlíe you appoint foure sufficient housekeepers to ward every day, (till you shall have directions to surcease), who shall ward either in their owne persons, or place some other able men in their turnes, such as you in your discretion shall approve of, who shall stand at every end of the Towne to keepe out all such strangers as shall not bring a certificate that they come from noe infected places. And that you charge the sayd warders that they shall not suffer any suche stranger to stay in the Towne, as they will answare for their remissions at their peril. And if any whome you shall appoint shalbe refractarie and refuse to ward, or shalbe negligent in their places, that you give us notice of their names & prese (express) their offence; and we have ordered that their good behaviour shall be granted against them; hereof you may not faile, as you will answare for your neglect at your perill. Given under our hands at Wallsall Boroughe, the seventeenth day of June, Anno Dom. 1637.

"And further that you warne all the Innkeepers, Alehousekeepers, and Victualers, within your constablewick, that they doe not nor shall

GENERAL receive any suche stranger into their houses, withoute ye like certificate,  
HISTORY. as they will avoyd the penaltie of beinge bound to ther good behaviour  
1637-1665. and suppression for victuallinge or sellinge ale any longer.

"THO. WOLLASTON, Maior,

"HENRYE STONE,

"WILLIAM WEBB."

In 1665 occurred the great plague, the last, as it was the most serious, outbreak of the disease in this country. It was mainly confined to London and its suburbs, where in one year alone no less than 68,526 persons died from the same disorder. The corporate authorities throughout the kingdom were roused to a sense of the emergency, and adopted the most stringent precautions. Walsall was by no means behindhand, and an order somewhat similar to the former was again issued, and from it we learn that a fatal case of the disease had actually occurred in the town; whilst in the Register of St. Matthew's we have the following entry: "1665, August 4th, Jonathan Dicken. Dyed of ye Plague." The order itself runs as follows:—

"WALSALL, | AN ORDER OF THE MAYOR AND JUSTICES OF THE PEACE OF THE  
26 AUG., 1665. | BURROUGH AND FFORBEN OF WALSALL."

"Whereas wee apprehend the greate danger of the carriers going to and returning from London, having found by sad experience that for their owne private advantage, (having at present double and treble the pay for carriage that they had formerly), have not refused to bring down both persons and goods to their owne knowledge out of infected parishes and places, to the endangering not only of themselves and families, but of the whole towne and countrey. And also being induced hereunto by the late danger wee were in by the death of a young man, (wtch is not yet over). That if it please god to prevent oure feares, it shd not only lay an obligation of thankfulness for oure greate deliverance, but ingage us for the future to use oure utmost diligence and endeavours for prevention of the like danger, doe hereby order in manner and forme following, that is to say,

"1. That if any carrier shall for the future desperately adventure to travell to London untill it shall please God upon the removeall or good abatement of the sicknes he may goe wth lesse danger and more safety; and shall presume to come home to his owne house at Walsall, that his house shall be shutt upp for the space of one month at the least.

"2. That noe inhabitant presume to enterteine any such carrier or their servants into their houses or companies by the space of one month after their retorne from London. or receive any goods or wares brought

downe by them before the same have been aired by the space of one month at the least, upon the payne of having their house shutt up, and to be otherwayes p ceeded against as dangerous persons & contemnners of Authority.

"3. That noe inhabitant within the liberties of the burrough and fforren aforesaid, shall hereafter presume to enterteyne anye passengers braught by the carriers or otherwise, only ife they make it appeare by legall testimony that they have been out of the Citty and subburbs of London by the space of one month at the least, and untill they may receive them with more safety, upon the like payne.

"4. Lastly, that all inhabitants, householders within the liberties of the sayd burrough and fforren, doe watch and ward with either their owne persons, or others that shall be approved of by the constables, at suche times and places as the constables shall appointe. And that the warders continue in their ward untill the watch come to relieve them at night, and the watchers continue their watch untill the warders come to relieve them in the morning, upon payne of every one being found negligent in any of the premises, to be bound to their good behaviour.

"RICHARD BLACKHAM, *Maior*.

"JOHN SACNSOM,

"WILLIAM SMITH."

That these precautions were not unnecessary was made manifest by the case of Birmingham, where the infection was said to have been introduced in a box of clothes brought by a carrier. That town was depopulated, the churchyard proving insufficient for the reception of the dead. So far as our own town was concerned, the steps taken by the authorities proved successful, as is shewn by the Burial Register: "1665, Nov. 3. Memorandum. So few were the burialls in those months, so many thousands died of ye Plague in London." The numbers of deaths from other causes recorded in the Register at this time are: May, 6; June, 5; July, 5; August, 2; September, 1; November, 2; December, 0. The two mandates just quoted were first printed by Glew, in his History, but it is not known where he saw them, and it has thus been impossible to collate them with the originals.

We may again devote some consideration to the several wealthy and important families who lived at this time in the town and neighbourhood.

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GENERAL  
HISTORY.

1637.

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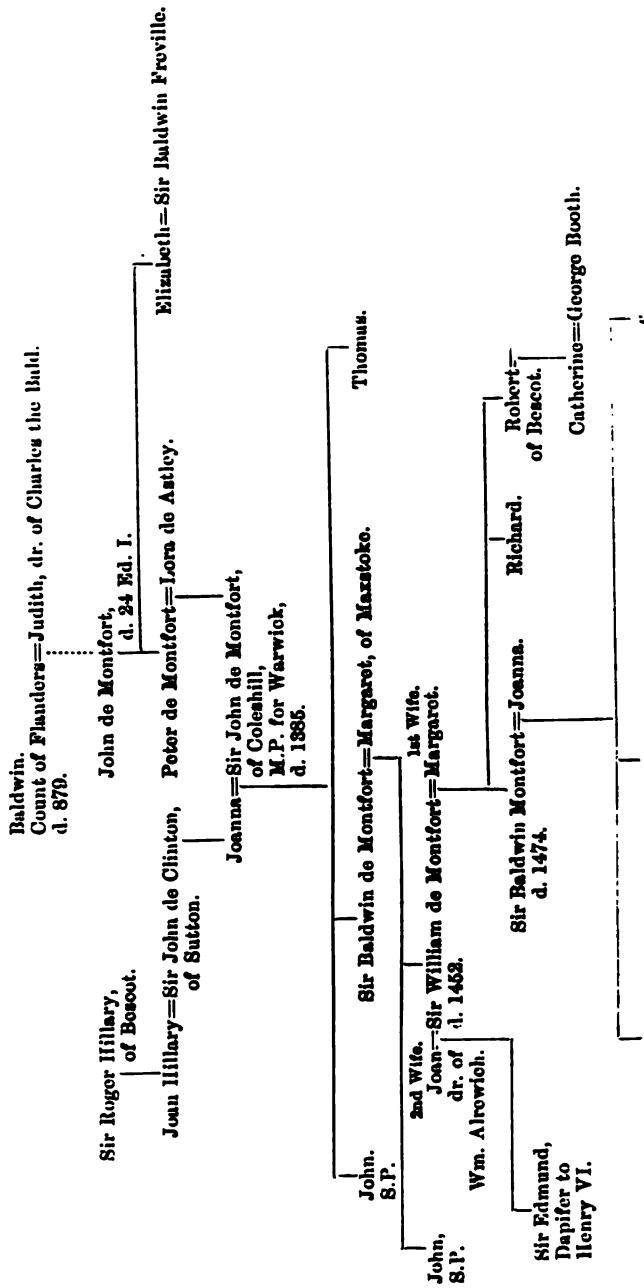
Clifford, "Hist.  
of Tixall,"  
p. 200.

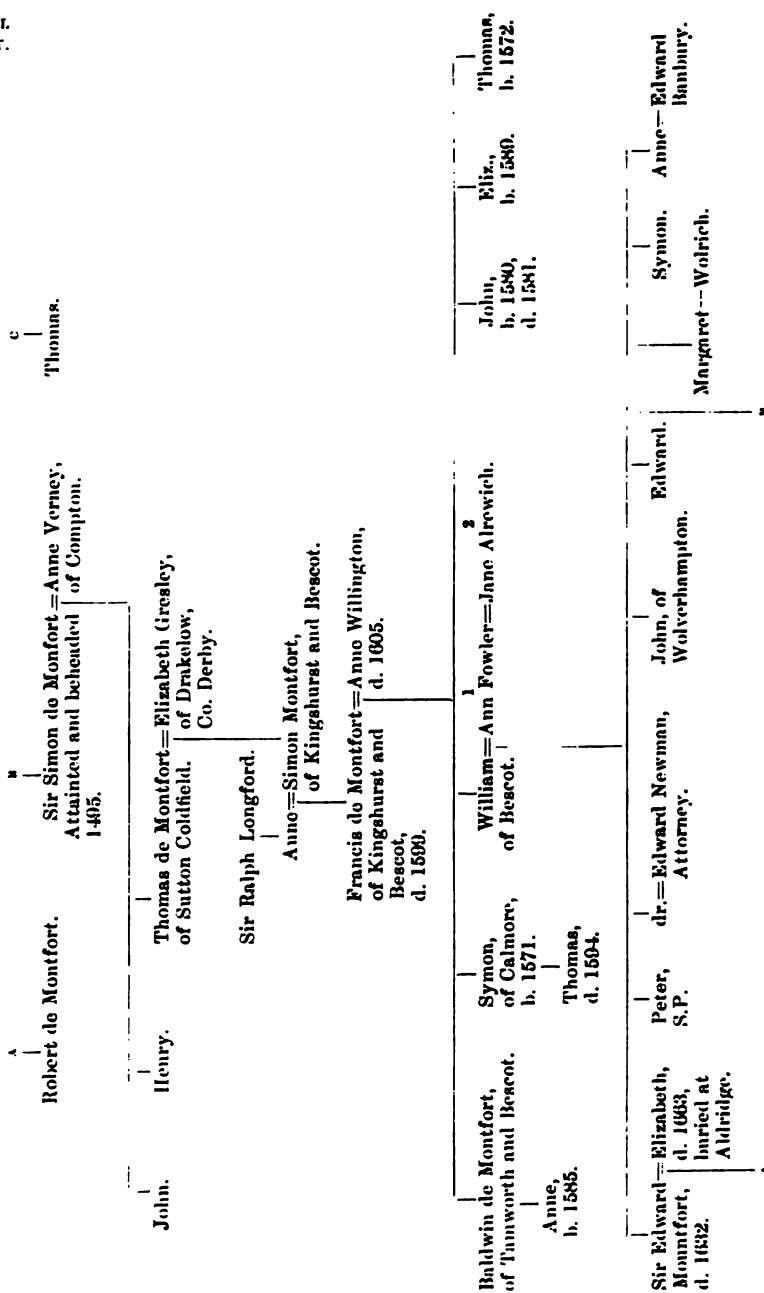
Cartulary of  
Walesdale.

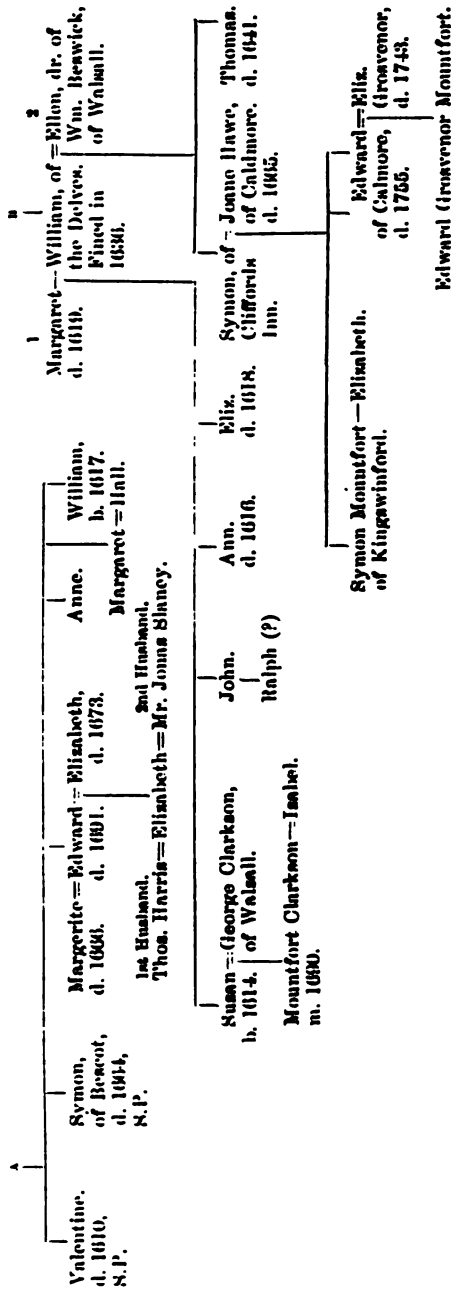
Bescot Hall was the residence of Sir Edward Mountfort, whose ancestors were seated here in the reign of Henry VI., inheriting the property by marriage with Joan de Clinton, a granddaughter of Sir Roger Hillari. The family and name of Montfort, or Mountfort, were of French origin, and took their name from the small town of Monfort Amaury, between Paris and Chartres. They claimed descent from Baldwin, Count of Flanders, and Judith, daughter of Charles the Bald, whilst another authority traces them to Robert I., King of France, who died in 1030. Two branches of this family settled in England. From the first descended Simon the Bald, who, by his marriage with Amicia, daughter of Robert de Bellamont, Earl of Leicester, brought that title into the family. His second son Simon became Earl of Leicester, and subsequently Comte de Toulouse. This nobleman earned a terrible notoriety by the part he took as leader of the crusade against the Albigenses, in 1209. He left two sons, of whom Amaury, the elder, inherited the French estates, resigning his English possessions in favour of his brother Simon, who came to this country in 1230, became a royal favourite, husband to Eleanor, sister of King Henry, and in 1239 was invested with the earldom of Leicester, of which his father had been deprived in 1210. In 1245 he was one of the witnesses to the grant by King Henry III., of Walesdale Church to the Abbey of Hales Owen. Simon, "the great Baron," was for long the most conspicuous figure of his time, and "fought stoutly, like a giant, for the liberties of England." He was killed at the battle of Evesham, on August 4th, 1265, and "thus lamentably (says an old writer) fell the flower of all knighthood." Of his sons, the eldest, Henry, also died on the field of Evesham. The second, Simon, held the castle of Kenilworth, and after its capture became head of a body of pirates. He died near Sienna about 1269.

PEDIGREE OF MONTFORT FAMILY.

Arms—Bendy or and azure. Crest—A plume of ostrich feathers argent.







GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1637.  
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Manche, "The  
Conqueror  
and his Com-  
panions,"  
p. 108.

Cal. of Deeds,  
47.

List. of Sutton,  
p. 50.

The second branch of the Montfort family, and the one with which Walsall is still intimately connected, took its rise from Hugh de Montfort, who accompanied William Duke of Normandy into England, and fought side by side with him at the battle of Hastings. He was called "Hugh with the beard," was rewarded by the Conqueror with the gift of 114 lordships, and was constituted governor of Dover Castle. He left a daughter, Alice de Montfort, who married Gilbert de Ghent, Earl of Lincoln, a nephew to Queen Matilda. Their son Hugh married Adelina, a daughter of Robert de Bellamont, Earl of Leicester, by his wife Elizabeth, heiress of the great Earl of Vermandois, third son of Henry I. of France, and a grandson of Hugh Capet. Hugh de Montfort left two sons, Robert, who died without issue, and Thurstin, who built Beldesert Castle, in Warwickshire, which was the family seat for many generations. Peter de Montfort, his grandson, was governor of Whittington Castle, and was killed with the great Earl Simon at Evesham. A descendant, Sir John de Montfort, of Coleshill, married Joanna, a granddaughter of Sir Roger Hillary, and thus became possessor of the Bescot estate. Sir William de Montfort held the Manor of Aldridge by marriage with Joan, daughter of William Alrewich. His name is found in the Calendar of Deeds, as witness to a grant of lands, in 1425. He was buried at Aldridge Church in 31 Henry VI. (1452-3), and was succeeded by his son, Sir Baldwin Mountfort. This Sir Baldwin had a half-brother, Sir Edward Mountfort, a man of unprincipled character, who was one of the royal carvers, and to whom was granted, for ten years, the Manor of Sutton, by Henry VI., after the defection of the Earl of Warwick. Having obtained, by bribery, the influence of the Duke of Buckingham, he seems to have deprived his brother of the patrimony of Coleshill, &c. The disinherited knight explains his case in the following curious document: "To all true christen pepull. Baldewyn

Mountfort, kt. Prest, sendeth greeting, &c., all such reles or other writings which y made to Humfrey, late lord of Stafford, &c. . . . hit was done by compulcion of the said Duke, and for fere of my deth, and of my son Sir Simond's. For in trouth the said Duke keped me in Coventre 14 deyes, and after had me to the Castel of Maxtoke, and there kept me; and my son Sir Symond was put in the Castell of Gloucester, and we coude never be delivered out till we agreed to certain Articles written in a bill annexid to this my writinge," &c. This record is dated 49 Henry VI. (1470-1.)

GENI  
Hist  
165  
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Sir Baldwin died in 1474, and his son Sir Simon, who succeeded him, is historically famous. He became implicated in the attempt of Perkin Warbeck, in 1495, to prove his right to the throne, and is stated to have lent him £30 for this object. He was arrested along with a number of other noblemen and gentlemen, tried at the Guildhall in London, and immediately afterwards, along with Sir Robert Ratcliff and William Daubeney, beheaded. In 1534 his grandson, also named Simon, procured a reversal of the attainder, and recovered a portion of the estates.

Pict. 1  
v. ii. 1

Francis Mountfort, of "Walsall Foreyne," is mentioned in the Lay Subsidy Roll of 1576, as paying £10, and contributing two light horsemen to the service of Elizabeth. He died in 1599.

Record

Passing over succeeding members of the family, we reach Sir Edward Mountfort, who sold the Manor of Aldridge in 1629. He died in 1633, and was followed by Simon Mountfort, Esq., who was possessed of Bescot during the Civil War. He is described as a recusant in 1640, and six years afterwards his lands were sequestered by the Parliament. He died unmarried in 1664, and was buried in Aldridge Church. The Bescot estate (which appears to have been restored to the family) passed to his brother Edward, and from him by a daughter, Elizabeth, to Thomas Harris, gent. William Montfort, a brother

Recusant

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HISTORY.

1637.

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of Sir Edward, settled at the Delves, near Walsall, and was the ancestor of the Walsall branch of the family, now represented by Mr. Charles Mountfort, of Dudley Street. By his first wife, Margaret, who died in 1619, William Mountfort left a daughter Susan, who married George Clarkson, ancestor of the Mountfort Clarksons. By his second wife, Ellen, he left a son, Symon, who married Joane Hawe, of Caldmore, from whom sprang the Mountforts of King's Swinford, and the Grosvenor Mountforts of Caldmore. Elizabeth married for a second husband Mr. Jonas Slaney, of Shifnal. He, or his son, was a magistrate for the county of Stafford, and also Vicar of Rushall in 1791. Part of the communion plate in Walsall Church bears the inscription "Ex dono Jonas Slaney, Gent," and the Registers contain many entries relating to members of the family. His affairs became much embarrassed, and in pursuance of a decree in Chancery, the estate was sold in 1788 to Richard Wilkes, Esq., for £3,200, and he, after living at Bescot for about six years, sold it to Richmond Aston, Esq., for £4,000. The building of the present Hall was begun by Mr. Slaney, who also built the bridge over the moat, shown in the engraving by Shaw. Shortly before his death, Mr. Aston commenced extensive alterations, which were completed by his widow, who also laid out the garden and grounds. After the death of Mr. Aston, Bescot became the property of James Russell, Esq., and then of William Marshall, Esq., Banker. It is now in the possession of James Slater, Esq. The two large pools mentioned by Shaw have been drained and converted into grass land, but their outline is still clearly defined; they were artificial, and used, probably, as reservoirs for the old moat.

Shaw, Art.,  
Bescot.

Erdswick,  
p. 303.

At Bentley Hall were seated the Lanes, an ancient family descended from Adam de Lona, of Wolverhampton. Richard Lone, or Lane, married the heiress of one of the Hydes, of Blymhill, in the year 1414, and shortly after, about 1430, became possessed of Bentley by purchase from Thomas Griffith, Esq.,

who in 8 Henry VI. (1429-30), granted to Richard Lone de la Hyde, all his lands, tenements, &c., in Bentley. Gx  
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John Lane, a successor, died in 3 James I. (1605-6), and left issue by his wife, Jane Littleton, a son, Thomas Lane, who inherited the estate, and whose son, Colonel Lane, is memorable for the loyal part he took in the Civil War, and afterwards in the romantic escape of Charles II. One of Plot's "marvellous tales" has reference to this Colonel Lane. Plot, 1  
A view of Bentley Hall as it stood is also preserved in Plot. The house was surrounded by two parks, Addit  
both of which contained deer at the time of the king's visit. Evid

George Haw, or Hall, of Caldmore, was the representative of another old and wealthy family of Solihull, co. Warwick, and Hawes, or Hall Lane, still exists to perpetuate the name. In 1540, George Haw is described as renting a water mill and horse mill in Walsall "parcell of the Manor of Walsall" from Robert Acton the then lord of the manor, and he is again mentioned in a Town Record for 1543. He was probably the founder of the White Hart, at Caldmore, a house subsequently famous. This George Haw was, I think, one of the promoters in conjunction with Nicholas Haw of the petition to Queen Mary for securing the remnants of the chantry lands for the benefit of the Grammar School; a petition which, as we have already seen, was crowned with success. He died in 1557, and left a close at the Town End Bank for the benefit of the poor. Curti

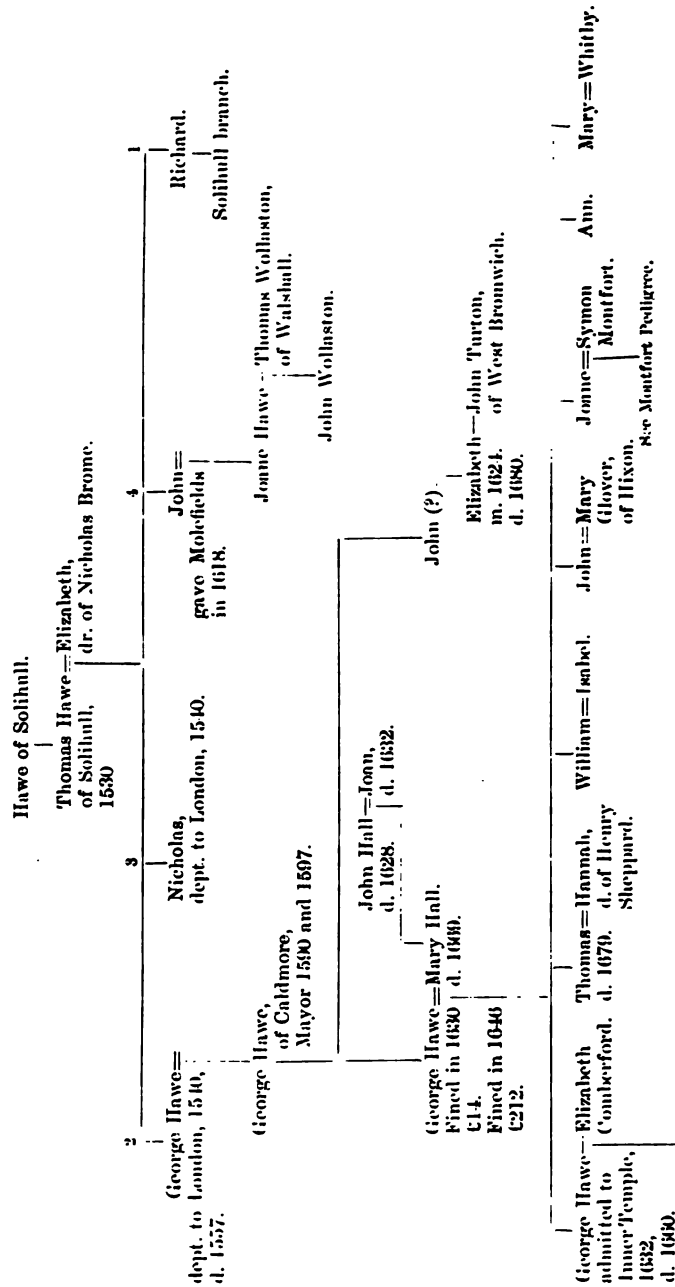
George Hawe, of Caldmore, probably a son of the former, was Mayor of Walsall in 1590, and again in 1597. His successor, also George, married Mary, daughter of John Hall, of Caldmore, and was among those who were fined for non-appearance at the Court of Charles I. to receive the order of knighthood. The amount of the fine was £14.

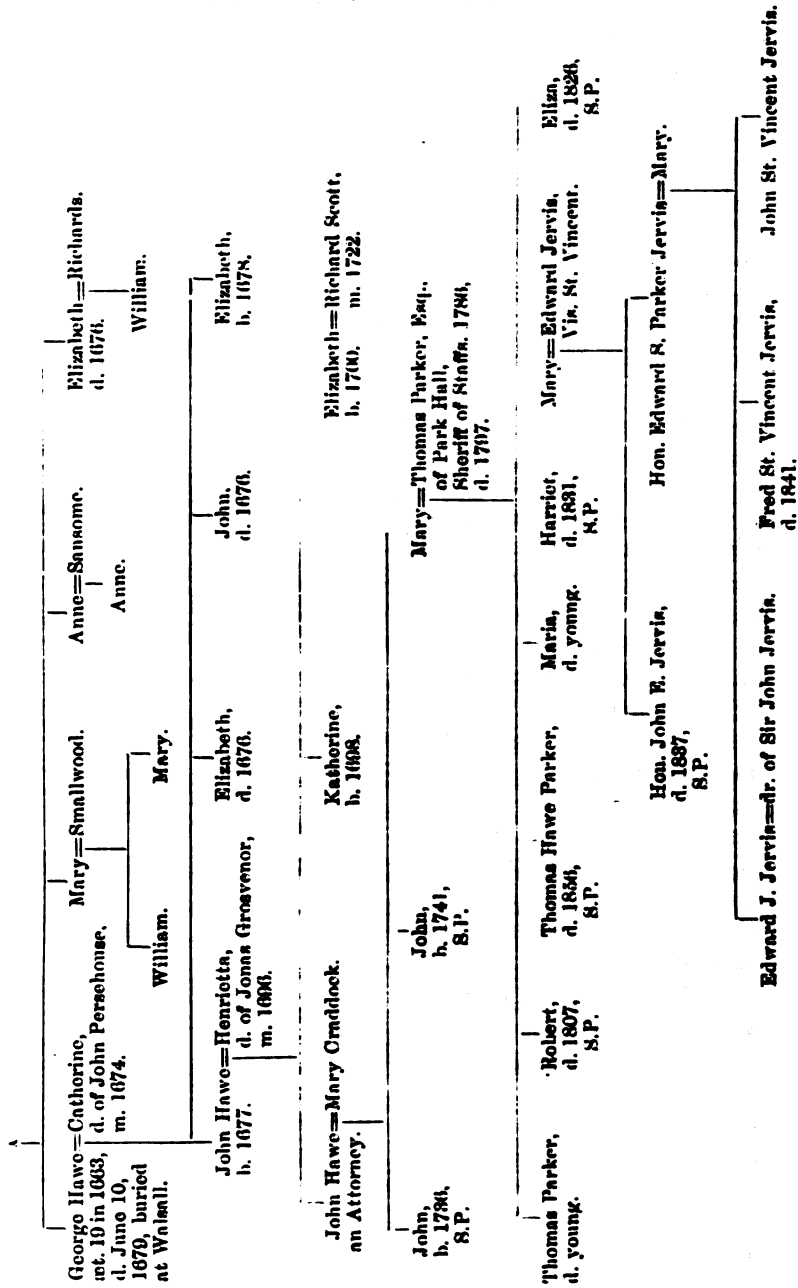


GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1637.

# PEDIGREE OF HAWES OF CALDMORE.

Arms—Sable, a chevron between three leopard's faces, or. Crest—A griffin's head erased, or, beaked gules.





GENERAL  
HISTORY.

1637.

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Oralist  
Composition  
Papers.

During the Civil War, George Hawe, together with his sons John and Thomas, "left the place of his habitation and went and lived in Lychfield, where he voluntarily contributed towards the maintenance and support of the king's party against the Parliament." For this royal adherence, he was forced in 1646 to compound for his estates by a fine of £212. Of his eldest son George Hawe, but little is recorded. Shaw erroneously supposed that he was "one of the sons of Lawrence Haw, a citizen and fishmonger of London, whose tomb is in Foster Church in Farringdon Ward." In 1632, he was admitted to the Inner Temple. He married Elizabeth Comberford, of Tamworth, and died on March 9th, 1660, leaving his estates in Walsall and Shelfield, and his seat at Caldmore to his son George, then aged 17, who is said to have greatly improved them. The fine Elizabethan House at Caldmore has been already mentioned. In July, 1643, it is said to have been honoured by a visit from Henrietta Maria, Queen of Charles I., on her passage through the town, an incident to be afterwards noticed. In the early part of the present century it was occupied by the Cowley family. From George Hawe the Caldmore estate descended to a great granddaughter Mary, who married Thomas Parker, Esq., of Park Hall, near Caverswall. His daughter Mary married Edward Jervis, Viscount St. Vincent, whose second son, the Hon. Edward Swynfen Parker Jervis, of Little Aston Hall, is the present representative of the Hawe family.

ot, p. 225.

id, p. 205.

Plot mentions a remarkable "Pear tree at Colmore, at the house of the heirs of Mr. Thomas Hawe, which (like Glastonbury thorn), though in frost and snow puts forth blossoms at Christmas." He also notices another curious circumstance "met with at Caldmore, at the house of one Mr. William Hawe, where about Christmas, 1679, there was a large bone, considering the place, taken out of the heart of a Beeve, of the form and bigness as described in the

Cutt. Just two inches long and pretty thick at one end; but there it has holes in it, which show it to be hollow and thin, yet it is very hard and solid." In Plate 22 of Plot, is a representation of this curious object.

GENE  
HIST  
163  
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The Wollastons, of Perton, and afterwards of Walsall, were another notable family of this period, but the place where they lived is not known, though it was probably in Lower Rushall Street. They appear from the survey of 1617, to have held a good deal of property in Walsall, and to have left several charities to the poor of the town.

Thomas Wollaston is mentioned in the Calendar of Deeds as early as 1569, and Thomas his grandson was Mayor of Walsall in 1636, and also the following year. An interesting letter to this gentleman from Sir William Dugdale, the historian of Warwickshire, has been already referred to. It relates to the Bascote estate in that county, and is dated December 12th, 1650. His brother John is described as a capital burgess in the charter of 1627, whilst his name is also among those who were fined for non-appearance at the Coronation of Charles I. to receive the order of knighthood. His nephew, John Wollaston, was Mayor of Walsall at the time (1661) when the charter was re-granted to the town by Charles II. The famous William Wollaston was of this same family, and was born in Shenstone. Robert Greisbrook the elder, who died in 1718, was a noted antiquary, and speaks with severity of many families in this county. He thus remarks of the Wollastons. "Several of the gentry would like it ill to be wrote less than esquires," and among others he mentions "Alderman Wollaston's son at Walsal."

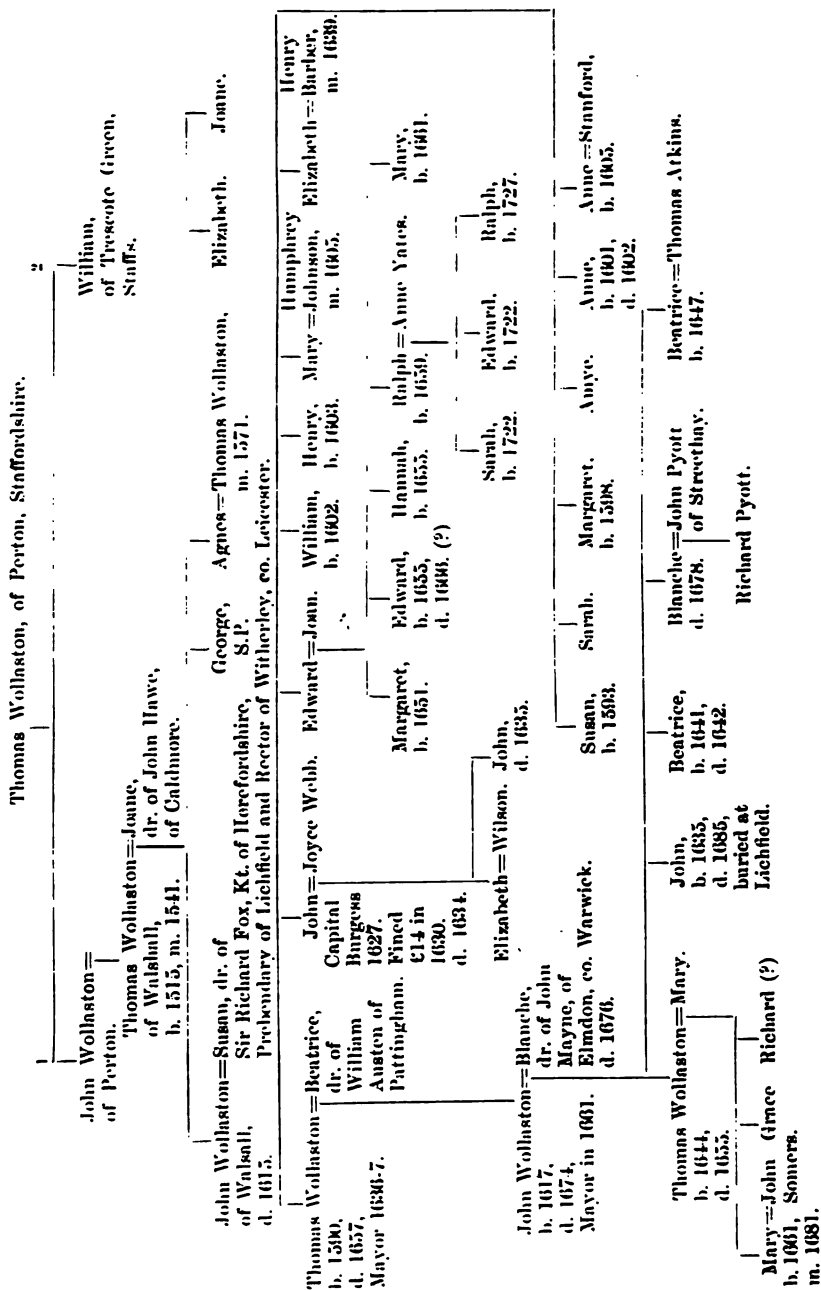
Calendar  
Deeds,

p. 182.

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of Shen

## PEDIGREE OF WOLLASTON.

*Arms*—Argent, three mullets pierced sable. *Crest*—Out of a mural coronet or, a demi griffin argent holding between the fore claws a pierced mullet sable.



Another old mansion of this time was Reynolds Hall, the seat of the Persehouse family. It stood on the slope to the east of the present Arboretum in the midst of large gardens, and was approached from the lower end of Rushall Street by a long carriage drive and an avenue of trees. It is figured in the old map by Shaw. The hall and gardens were destroyed in order to get at the limestone about the beginning of the present century. Traces of the old garden walls were visible about fifty years ago. They were very massive, and were lined with ancient fruit trees. Built by an old family named Reynolds, it descended through a daughter to the Walkers, and again by a daughter to John Piershouse or Pershouse. John Persehouse belonged to a Sedgley family, and married Elizabeth Walker, his first wife, at Walsall, about the year 1550. The arms of Walker were "argent, a chevron, sable, charged with two bezants, or, a crescent of the first, between three crescents of the second." John Pershouse married for his third wife Anne, widow of William Perrott, of Wollaston Hall.

In the Visitation of Staffordshire, made in 1583, Joh'es Parshouse de Walsall is described as "Ignobilis," that is, not entitled to bear arms, or in plain English, "no gentleman." For thus having assumed a title and character to which he had no claim, he was among those who were "disclaymed at Leichfeilde on Wensday, the XIII day of August, 1583." His name is also frequently met with in the Calendar of Deeds. John Persehouse, his eldest son, succeeded him. He was a Barrister-at-Law of the Inner Temple. He married Margaret, daughter of William Perrott, whose widow became his father's third wife. He died in April, 1636, and left a charity to the town. He also left behind two sons, William the younger, who seems to have had property in Walsall, and who was also an Utter Barrister of the Middle Temple. His widow, Ellen, subsequently married the Rev. Thomas Burdall, Vicar of Walsall. Richard

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Persehouse, his elder brother, inherited Reynolds Hall. He married Frances, daughter of Humphrey Wirley, of Hamstead, and died in December, 1650. His name is frequently met with in the Calendar of Deeds. Of his two sons, Humphrey, the second, died unmarried in 1697; he left the Communion Plate to St. Matthew's Church. John, the elder son, is said to have adhered to King Charles I., and according to the Royalist composition papers was forced to a composition with the Parliament, at the rate of £119, by the name of John Piershouse, of Reynolds Haw, or Hall, Walsall. At the time of the outbreak of the Civil War, he could only have been 15 years of age. He married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Edward Chester, of Royston, in Hertfordshire, by whom he had a son John, æt. 7 years in 1663. John Persehouse, the father, was Prebendary and Vicar of Weston, Pen and Rosse (or Royston), which he left to his natural son, John George Lydiatt, who seems to have subsequently sold his right to a William Persehouse, of Hurst Hill and Walsall. John, eldest son of John Persehouse, married Hester Littleton, and bought Lynn Hall, where he lived. He left a charity to the poor of the town of Walsall, and at his death his son William came into possession of Reynolds Hall. He was in the Commission of the Peace, and died in 1749, leaving a son Richard, and two daughters, one of whom married John Douglas, D.D., who was chaplain in ordinary to the king, a Canon of Windsor, and afterwards Bishop of Salisbury. The other married the Rev. Mr. Burgess, of Hertfordshire.

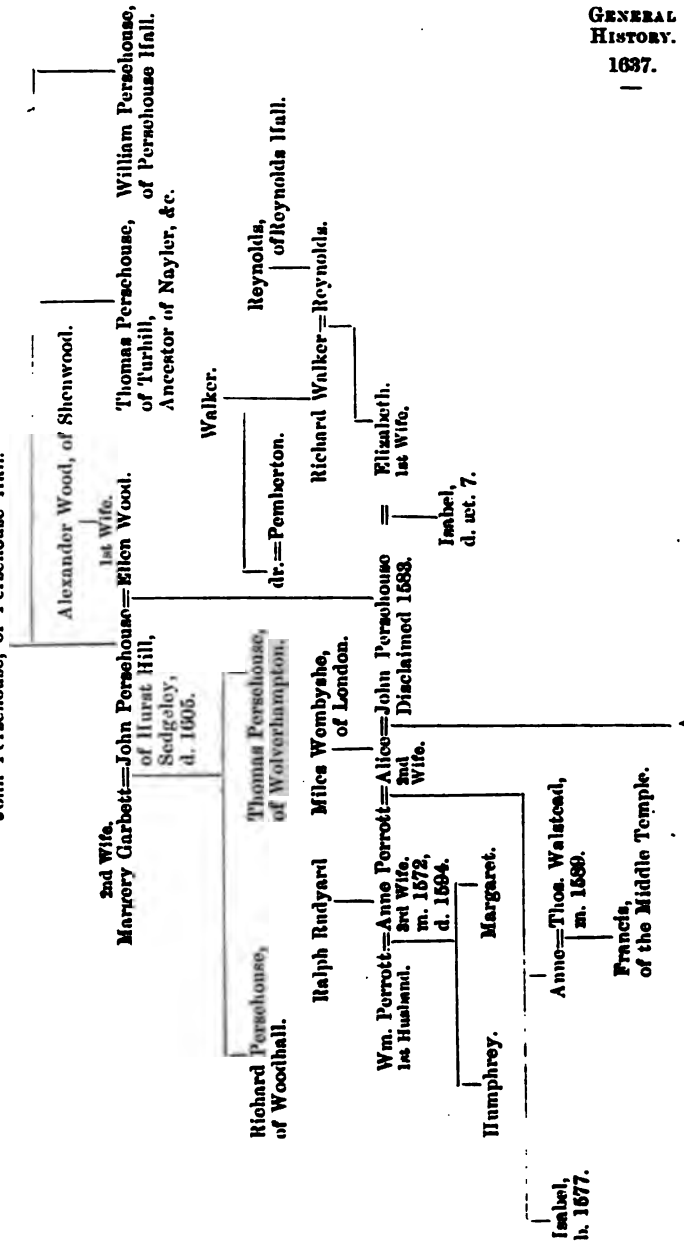
et. of Shen-  
stone, p. 237.

William Persehouse was the one before whom John Wesley was brought, on his memorable visit to the town in 1743. There is a curious anecdote related by Richard Baxter in his Diary, in which he describes the treatment he received from this Magistrate.

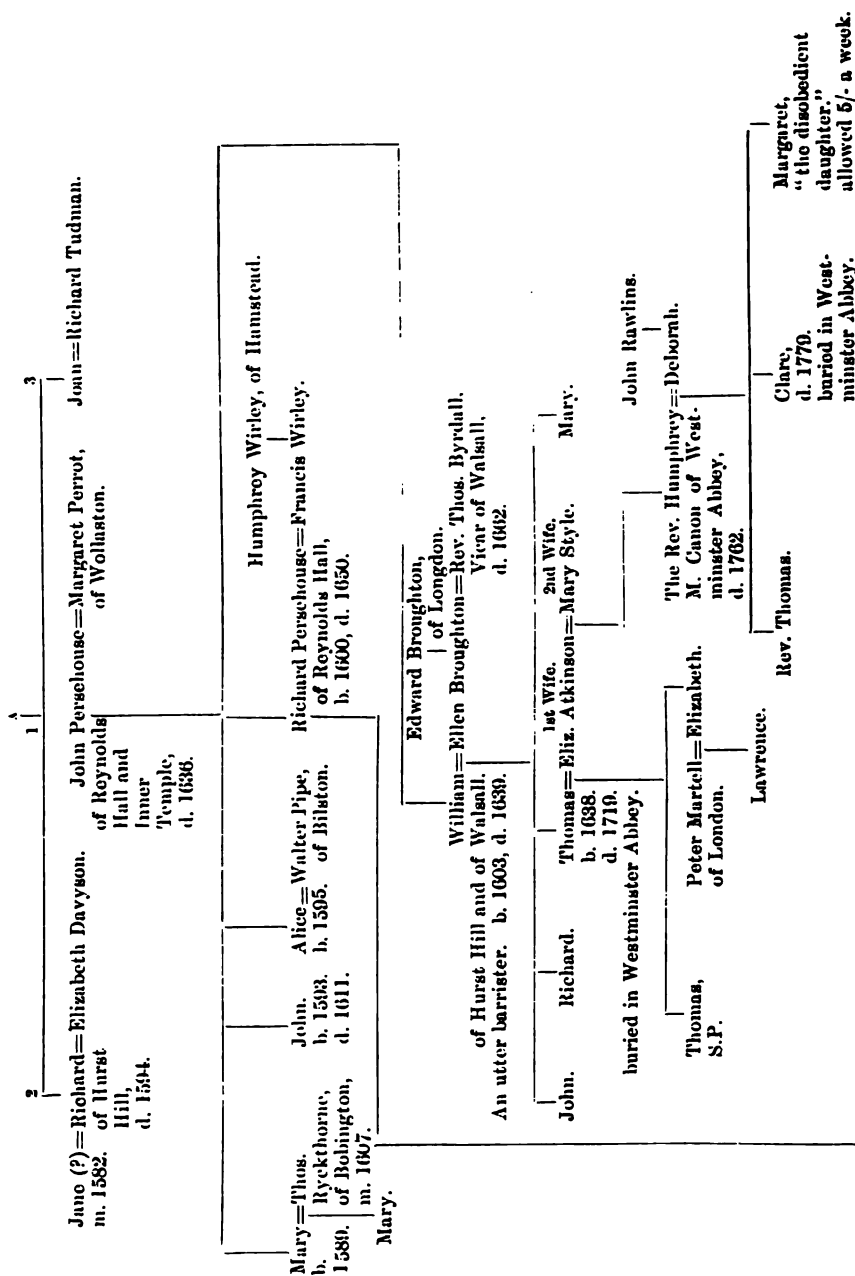
trial, v. i,  
. 114.

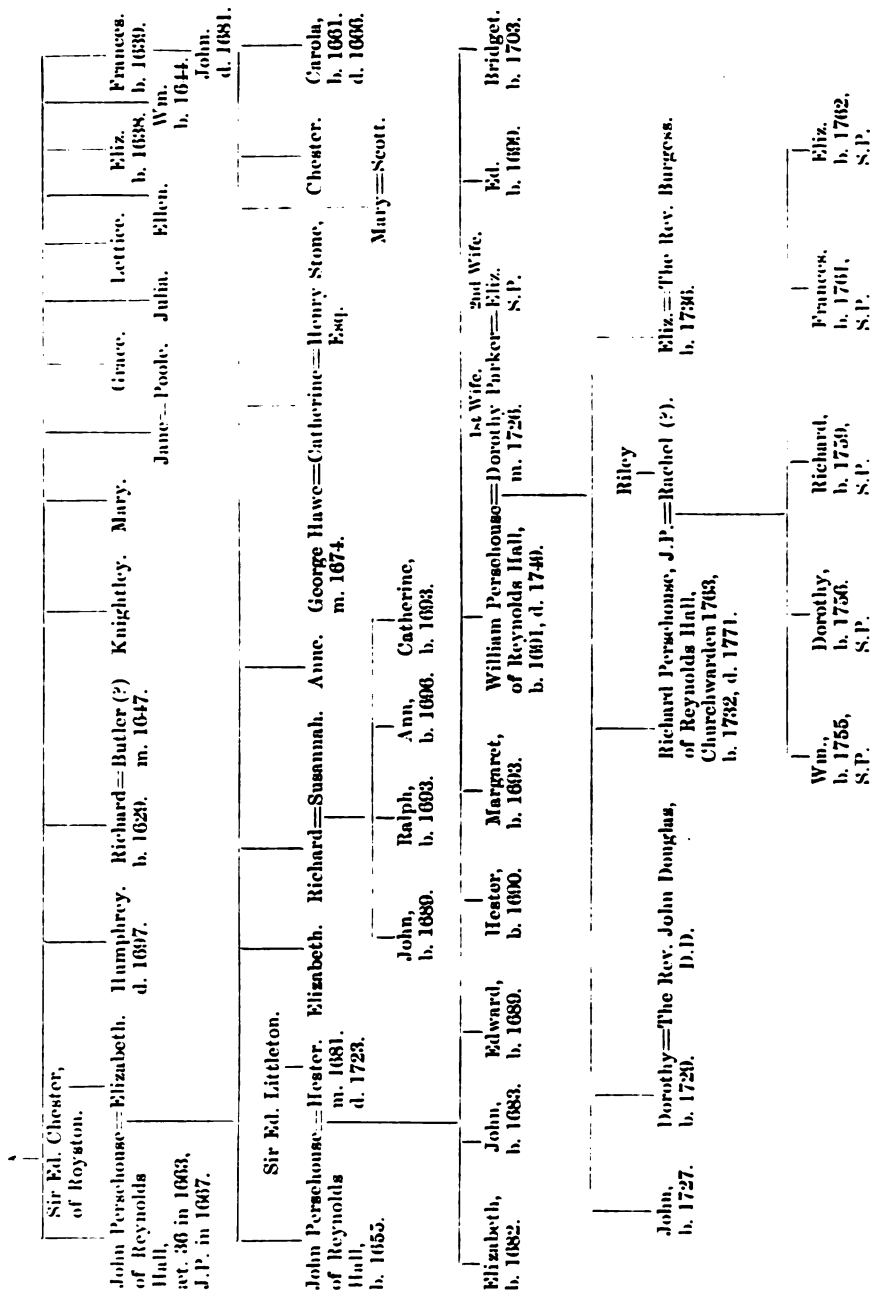
The son Richard was a minor, and the last who lived at Reynolds Hall.

**John Perschouse, of Perschouse Hall.**





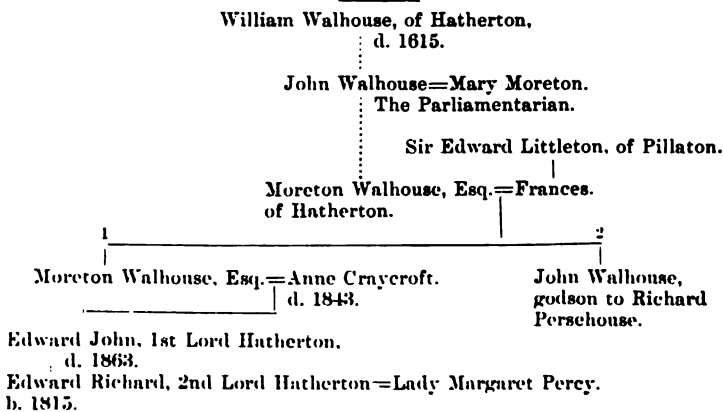




GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1637.  
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In 1762, this same Richard Persehouse was one of three persons who were pricked down for Sheriff of the County of Stafford, but it appears that he was neither nominated nor confirmed by the king. He became heir to — Parker, of Bloxwich, his mother's brother. Richard was twice married, and had several children, none of whom, however, survived. He himself is said to have had a tender constitution, and a thin habit of body, which was attacked by a fever that carried him off in December, 1771, being not more than forty years old. He left the chief part of his estates at Reynolds Hall, Lynn, &c., to his godson, John Walhouse, second son of Moreton Walhouse, Esq., of Hatherton, near Cannock, by Frances, sister of Sir Edward Littleton, of Pilaton, Baronet. This Moreton Walhouse was of an ancient family, long settled at Hatherton Hall. An ancestor, John Walhouse, took an active part against the king at the battle of Edgehill, and was afterwards in secret rebellion against Charles II. Moreton Walhouse, in 1791, was Sheriff of Staffordshire. He married Ann Craycroft, and by her had a son, Edward John, who on the death of Sir Edward Littleton in 1812 without issue, assumed, as grand-nephew, his surname, and in 1835 was raised to the peerage, under the title of Baron Hatherton.

#### CONNECTION OF WALHOUSE & LITTLETON.



The first Lord Hatherton died in 1863, and was succeeded by Edward Richard Littleton, the present possessor of the title and estates.

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HISTORY.  
1037.

The arms of the Persehouse's of Reynolds Hall were the same as the Woodhall branch, but without quartering. They were granted by St. George in 1614.

Visitation of  
1614.

It yet remains to notice the village of Bloxwich and the hamlet of Shelfield, lying within the foreign of Walsall.

Bloxwich, in Domesday spelt Blocheswic, is a chapelry in the foreign of Walsall. The great Survey records that there existed a wood of 30 acres, and its parochial acreage at that time has been estimated at 3,000 acres.

In 1300 Roger de Morteyn and Margaret la Russe are mentioned as holding the vills of Blakeswych and Great Blockeswych, Shelfhull (Shelfield), &c

Perambulation  
Roll.

The Skeffingtons of Fisherwick appear as the next owners. Sir John, who is mentioned in the Town Records, married in 1563, and settled lands, &c., in Barr, Rushall, Goscote, Walsole, Blokswich, and Shelfield, on his wife, Alice Cave. It may be noted that he was a connection of the Hillarys of Bescote, and that all these estates were formerly possessions of that family. Sir William, his son, was a J.P. and Sheriff of Staffordshire in 1600. In 1631 he grants lands in Bloxwich. Sir William and Sir John, his two sons, appear to have held property in this neighbourhood until 7 Charles I.

Cal. of Deeds,  
109.

Shaw, Art.,  
Fisherwick.

Cal. of Deeds,  
223.

In 3 James I. (1605-6), Sir Gilbert Wakeringe was Sheriff of Staffordshire. He was a son of Sir Edward Wakeringe, of Rickmandsworth, in co. Herts. In the Visitation of Staffordshire, in 1614, he is described as a knight and J.P., and in 1615 he is a party to a mortgage of land in Great Bloxwich. Sir Simon Degg says that Sir Gilbert "kept a great flutter in this county (Herts) in the beginning of King James' time, and died December 25th, 1617, seized of lands in Bloxwich and surrounding manors."

ibid., 177.

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1637.

These he left to his nephew John, son of James Wakeringe. Sir Gilbert's arms were "Ermine on a chief azure, three lions rampant, or." The estate passed afterwards into the family of Vane, Earl of Darlington, and in 1686 into that of Wilbraham.

Cal. of Deeds,  
241, &c.

There are many records in the Calendar of Deeds relating to lands, &c., in Bloxwich. The most important relate to a Bill of Complaint, dated 1648, by Danyell Jevon, of Bloxwich, on behalf of himself and the inhabitants of Great and Little Bloxwich and Harden; and by Henry Stone, Esq., Richard Perschouse, Gent., Thomas Wollaston, Gent., and others, on behalf of the inhabitants of Walsall, against the company of Merchant Taylors of London, for the non-payment of the arrears of certain annuities bequeathed by William and Robert Parker, merchant taylors, for keeping in repair a chapel of ease at Great Bloxwich, and providing a stipend for a minister there, and for "finding a man to play the organ" in Walsall church.

Record Office.

The chapel of Bloxwich, dedicated to St. Thomas of Canterbury, is not named in the endowment of the Vicarage of Walesdale in 1248, but from the fact that a chantry was founded there by one of the Hillarys, we may infer its existence either then or a short time subsequently. The first definite mention we have of it is in 1502, in the "Letters of John Arundell," and thirteen years later is "a license dated 28th February, 1515, to Richard Hurst and others, to found a Perpetual Chantry of one chaplain in the chapel of St. Thomas, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Bloxwich, in the Parish of Walsall, Staffordshire, for the good estate of the King Henry VIII. and Queen Katherine, Thomas Archbishop of York, Sir Thomas Lovell, Treasurer of the Household, and others."

Valor Ecclesiasticus.

In 1535 Thomas Bowrne received as chantry priest the annual sum of £5, and from 1613 to 1627 various gifts are recorded as being left by members of the Parker family.

In 5 Ed. VI. (1551-2), John Bowes, Esq., died seized of the chapel of Bloxwich, which he left to his son and heir, afterwards Sir John Bowes, of Elford. The chapel was rebuilt in 1794, at a cost of £1,207 15s. 0d., enlarged in 1833, and again rebuilt in 1876. The right of presentation, once claimed by the Merchant Taylors' Company, and then by the Vicar of Walsall, is now in the gift of the parishioners.

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1640-1642.

Endswick,  
p. 206.

Scelfeld (Shelfield) is recorded as having lain waste at the time of Domesday, and it has been credited with a parochial acreage at that time of 985 acres. In 1641 (17 Charles I.), it was purchased by William Glascott from Sir William Skevington, of Fisherwick, and Richard, his son. The record runs: "All that manor or lordship of Shelfield and Gregory Shelton's cottage, chief rents and services, &c., for £24." Subsequently it passed into the hands of Sir Richard Wilbraham.

Curtis MS.

We are now on the threshold of that period of civil strife, which marked the closing years of Charles I., and with which the town of Walsall and its neighbourhood were very closely connected. It will be well briefly to consider matters as they stood at this time.

On November 3rd, 1640, met the renowned Long Parliament, and among its members sat Sir Edward Leigh, of Rushall, newly elected on October 30th for the town of Stafford. Sir Edward appears to have been strongly attached to the Presbyterian cause, which led him into an attitude hostile to the king, although from his after conduct, we may believe that he belonged to the more moderate members of the House.

Dugdale.  
"Short View  
of the late  
Troubles."

On the 23rd of April, 1642, the king was denied an entrance into Hull, and the Civil War, which had been long smouldering, broke out in earnest. In this neighbourhood the position of the parties was much as follows at the commencement of the

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HISTORY.  
1642.

war, but it must be remarked that this position was constantly changing, according to the varying fortunes of either sides. Clarendon says, "the country generally was in favour of the Parliament;" but this can hardly be said of Staffordshire, where the king had many staunch friends and numerous strong garrisons. This presumption will appear in stronger relief as we proceed.

Clarendon.

On August 25th, 1642, Charles, after leaving Stoneley, where he had been the guest of Sir Thomas Lee, raised his standard at Nottingham, "to which place," says Clarendon, "came very good recruits of foot from Leicestershire and Staffordshire." In the following month he came to Shrewsbury, and "a more general and passionate expression of affections cannot be imagined, than he received from the people of those counties of Derby, Stafford, and Shropshire, as he passed." Later on in January, 1643, he says, "the rebels drew a great body of horse and foot out of Derbyshire, Staffordshire, and Lincolnshire for the siege of Newark." In this county, Lichfield immediately declared in the king's favour, and equipped a body of horse raised by Sir Richard Dyott and commanded by his son Richard Dyott, Esq. The Close was also strongly garrisoned by the inhabitants under the Earl of Chesterfield.

Tutbury Castle was a royal residence, and was of course garrisoned for the king under the command of the Lord Loughborough. The Castle of Ashby-de-la-Zouch was likewise fortified for the king by General Hastings, who had been purposely fetched from Newark by Sir John Harper, of Calke, a warm adherent of the royal party. Tamworth Castle was also occupied for the king, while Dudley Castle was strengthened and garrisoned under the direction of Sir Thomas Levison. The king deemed this stronghold of great consequence, and wrote to Lord Dudley and others desiring them to assist the Colonel in defending it. Eccleshal Castle was another stronghold belonging to the king, and it held out vigorously

for a long time, the Bishop of Lichfield himself helping to defend it. Stourton Castle was also fortified by the Royalists, but surrendered to the Parliament in 1644. The Castle of Stafford was another, which was likewise garrisoned for the king, but it did not hold out long, being taken by Sir William Brereton in 1644, after being bravely defended by the "Ould Lady Stafford." Other garrisons belonging to the king were Keele House, Patteshall and Swinerton, while coming nearer home, Col. John Lane, of Bentley; John Perschouse, of Reynolds Hall; George Hawe, of Caldmore; with Hopkins, of Wednesbury, were avowed loyalists. Thus might Clarendon truthfully remark that "Col. Hastings found some convenient garrisons in Staffordshire."

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HISTORY.  
1642.  
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Book vi, p. 20

On the other side we may remark, that Painsley House, Caverswall Castle, and the Town of Burton were held by the Parliament. Derby was held by Sir John Gell, and Sir Edward Leigh having attached himself to the same side, assumed the rank of Colonel in the army, strengthened the defences of his house at Rushall, and garrisoned it against the king. Around this little stronghold the tide of battle rose and fell several times before it was finally dismantled by order of the Parliament.

The great town of Birmingham was thoroughly disaffected, while Walsall itself, at this period of the strife undoubtedly strongly loyal to the king, could yet produce such men of distinction and notoriety as Captain Henry Stone and Colonel Fox the Tinker. John Sylvester, of Stonnal, and Capt. Henry Jackson, of Wall, were also prominent on the side of the Parliament.

Such was the general aspect of the country around here at the outbreak of the war, and for the next three years this neighbourhood was the scene of continued warfare and bloodshed; while contributions in the form of weekly payments were levied by each party, the whole country being parcelled out amongst



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HISTORY.  
1642-1643.

the different troops, and the people unwillingly made to support both Royalist and rebel forces. As may easily be supposed this continual feud led to the land around being greatly impoverished, while great distress prevailed, and the fields lay uncultivated and uncared for.

Dr. Burney's  
Collection.

The following letter from a rebel newspaper throws a little light on the situation here at this time :

" Walsall in Staffordshire, September 24th, 1642.

" Mast. Comberford, of Tamworth, sent three or foure cart loads of goods and ammunition, with many cattle, lately towards Dudley Castle for safety; but Birmingham men having notice hereof seized upon them. This Comberford is a great malignant. This and other things makes Birmingham extremely threatened. Some cavaliers were lately apprehended here (at Walsall) for endeavouring to levie souldiers, for which dreadful menaces are denounced against us also." &c.

Hist. of Sutton  
Chase, p. 55.

On the 16th and 17th of the following month Charles was at Aston Hall, the guest of Sir Thomas Holt. Before proceeding from here on the 18th he is reputed to have met the loyal gentlemen of Staffordshire, and reviewed their troops at King's Standing, on the Old Chester Road. For his royal adherence Sir Thomas had not only to compound but also to suffer imprisonment; while his house was ransacked and damage done to the extent of £20,000. The Birmingham men on this occasion seized the King's carriage containing the royal plate and furniture, which was conveyed for security to Warwick Castle.

On Sunday afternoon, the 23rd October, 1642, was fought the memorable battle of Edgehill, and from this time the war was carried on in earnest.

Dr. Burney's  
Collection.

In *Mercurius Aulicus*, a Royalist paper for February 24th, 1643, we are introduced to Col. Tinker Fox, of Walsall. Of his origin nothing is known (he was probably a brasier); but he embraced the cause of the Parliament with great zeal. He raised a troop among his own comrades, constituted himself their colonel; and being joined by numerous recruits, he soon became a formidable and intrepid antagonist.

Thus runs the Royalist narrative: "The Rebels intending a Reformation by the Sword, will square their church according to their Army. And therefore they thrust all trades into the Pulpit, since their shops were emptied for Colonels and Captains. Particularly one Fox, a Tinker of Walsall, in Staffordshire, having got a horse and his hammer for a pole-axe, invited to his society 16 men of his brethren (above half as many as departed this world at Banbury Assize). This joviall Colonel Tinker, with his 16 swete brethren, marched seven miles to Birmingham, in Warwickshire, neere which Towne they fortified a House, called Edgebaston House. But (remembering their trade) they mended one hole but made a worse; for they pulled down the church to make their fortifications; disposed of the Bells to their fellows in Birmingham. In this house they have nestled so long that their 16 are swollen up to 200, which rob and pillage very sufficiently. A man, whose horse they had stolen, petitioned Colonel Fox to restore his horse, or to set a low price, and he would pay for him. Tinker Fox answered that he must not restore the horse for nothing, and to sell him (quoth he) 'I hold very dishonourable.'"

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HISTORY.  
1643.

A few days afterwards we meet for the first time with the name of Captain Henry Stone, who was ordered with his soldiers to demolish Swinnerton House, the residence of the Fitzherberts. A great deal of doubt hangs over this valiant gentleman, and he has received the credit of various charitable benefactions to the town, upon very questionable authority. He is stated by Shaw to have been a merchant of Plymouth; but Mr. Worth, the historian of that town, who has made careful enquiries for me, states that he is unable to discover any trace of the name in the local records. Captain Stone rapidly attained a prominent part in the war; raised and equipped at his own expense a troop of horse, and was soon placed on the "Safety Committee," for the Midland Counties, which sat at Stafford, and which also comprised among its

Memorials of  
Charles I.

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1643.

Additions to  
Erbiswick.

Shaw, Appen-  
dix.

members Colonel Edward Leigh, of Rushall. Stone is said by Sir Simon Degg to have been during the war "a busy man in sequestrations and decimations, and to have gained thereby a great estate." He likewise appears to have inherited from his uncle, Henry Stone, of Walsall (whom I presume to have been the founder of the charities), a seat here, upon the condition that he was to reside upon it. After the war he settled down at this house, which was situated in Birmingham Street, and which subsequently became known by the sign of the "Wheat Sheaf," and was a noted hostelry. The Wheat Sheaf was destroyed about 1813, when the present building was erected. On a plate may still be seen the initials "H.S. 1662." These were originally engraved on a large brick, which I believe is still preserved in the Cowley family. Sir Simon Degg further states that Captain Stone was "a Justice of the Peace, and in 1656 attempted to have been a knight for the county, but was put back with disgrace." Shaw says that "after the Restoration he distinguished himself by acts of charity and benevolence, as may be seen from some of his benefactions to the poor. He also built a large gallery at the West end of the church, for the accommodation of those parishioners who had not seats of their own, and he left money to keep it in constant repair." This gallery was known as "Stone's loft." He left also a charity to the poor of Cannock. His name occurs in 1665 in the marriage register of West Bromwich church. Shaw says that there were three Henry Stones; the will of the last is dated 1689, and he also was a benefactor to the poor. As already stated, Shaw has evidently mistaken Captain Stone for his uncle, the real founder of these several charities. The Captain dying without issue his property was left to three granddaughters; but from some subsequent difficulty the estate was finally thrown into Chancery.

Returning to the progress of the war, we find that on March 2nd, 1643, the king's garrison at Lichfield was besieged by Lord Brook, whose death

from a musket ball in the eye is familiar to every one. Two days later, the following is recorded:—"March 4th, 1643. Whereas the forces of Lichfield have taken prisoner Mr. Henry Shephard, of Walsall, and do detain him, it is ordered that Captain Stone shall have licence to fetch in any delinquent or malignant in this county, and keep him prisoner to ransom his brother the said Mr. Shephard." Three days later, the "Close" at Lichfield was taken by Sir John Gell.

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Shaw, v. II, p

On March 15th, 1643, we find the weekly pay of Gratwich, Kingston, Draycott, &c., assigned to Colonel Leigh for payment of his foot company and officers. On the 19th of this same month was fought the battle of Hopton, a small place on this side of Ingestre. The Earl of Northampton was killed, but no decisive victory was attained by either party. The following day Wolverhampton was taken by the Parliamentary forces, under Sir William Brereton, together with a great quantity of arms and ammunition.

About this time Rushall Castle, then held by Colonel Leigh, was attacked by Prince Rupert and captured. In a pamphlet dated 1643, it states in speaking of Prince Rupert's attack upon Birmingham, that "one Mistress Leigh, a gentlewoman at Rushall Hall, near Walsall, valliantly defended her house, with the onely helpe of her men and maides against him, and at length came off bravely with quarter and credit." Colonel Leigh, with his garrison, must have been absent at the time. The exact date of this occurrence is not given, but it was either a few days before or after the so-called battle of Birmingham, which took place on April 3rd, 1643. I think a few days before, for in a tract published at this time we have it distinctly stated, that before this event Prince Rupert and his forces were quartered at Stratford and Henley, and were pillaging the country round. On the other hand Clarendon says, "From Bromicham

Dr. Burney's  
Collection.

Book VII, p  
314.

the prince without longer stay than to remove two

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or three slight garrisons in the way which made very little resistance," marched to Litchfield. Colonel Hastings seems to have taken temporary command, and indeed, if we are to believe other contemporary records, it was taken yet earlier, for "A Perfect Diurnall," &c., says that "the week after the Parliament forces had taken Lichfield (*i.e.* 12th—18th March), the Earl of Northampton and Col. Hastings, governor of Rushall, advanced towards Lichfield intending to besiege it, but were compelled to fly with the loss of about 60 horse." Again, another record states, "that on the 3rd March, while Sir John Gell was making an ineffectual attack upon the Close at Lichfield, he was harrassed by sallies from the small garrisons at Tamworth and Rushall." The difficulty lies in explaining the presence of Prince Rupert, who did not so far as we know come into the locality until a month later.

Shortly after its capture by the Royalist forces, the command of Rushall Hall was assumed by Col. Lane, of Bentley, and the following extract from the diary of a Royalist at Tamworth, shows that the Colonel was by no means an inactive spectator of the conflict: "This place, with Rushall Castle, another small garrison of the king's, did keep their holy brethren with dulling their spirits with over much sleep, in giving them several alarms, no rest or respite night or day, with some particularized skirmishes." Again on the 1st April we learn that five men were pressed for his Majesty's service at Dudley Castle by the constables of Mavesyn Ridware, who inform us they were sent to Rushall Hall.

Shaw, v. i, p.  
108.

On April 3rd, 1643, occurred the so-called battle of Birmingham, in reality a mere skirmish, followed by the plunder and partial burning of the town. Prince Rupert on his way from Henley to attack Lichfield, "the garrison of which was grown to that strength that it infected those parts exceedingly," advanced to it by way of Birmingham, with a force of 700 foot and 1,200 horse. This town was noted

for its "hearty, wilful, and affected disloyalty to the king," and though unfortified and unguarded save by two small companies of soldiers it refused admission to the prince, and he accordingly after a slight skirmish forced an entrance, plundered the town, and set fire to it in several places. In this action the Earl of Denbigh was mortally wounded. He died at Cank (Cannock), on the Saturday following, and was buried at Monks Kirby. Hex  
Hist  
16  
  
Life of I  
p. 10.

An account of this attack is contained in a letter written from Walsall by a worthy gentleman to his friend in Oxford concerning Birmingham, and is dated "Walshall, April 5th, 1643." The author was a cavalier and a member of the prince's retinue, advancing to meet him from Lichfield. His narrative relates the bitter feeling of the Birmingham people against the king, their resistance to Prince Rupert's entrance, and the regret of the prince that so much destruction of property should have occurred without his wish or command, &c.

Another tract dated April 8th, says "the cavaliers lye about Clanks (Cannock) beyond Wosall (Walsall), and are joyned with Hastings force, and intend to set on the Close at Lichfield," &c. On this same date (April 8th), the weekly pay and five weeks of arrears of Norton, Wyrley, Rushall, Wednesbury, &c., is assigned to Colonel Leigh, "of the rebel army." Hutton,  
of Bi  
ham,  
  
Shaw, v

On April 10th, Tong Castle is ordered to be relieved as Capt. Stone and others shall think fit, and on the same date, Col. Edward Leigh signs an order in behalf of John Keeme, of Horton. Ibid.

Leaving Birmingham, Prince Rupert, "the Prince of Plunderers," as he was now called, marched directly to Lichfield, where he was joined according to some author (not Clarendon), "by three or four hundred proper fellows from Walsal, who came with bills and hooks to serve the king." The prince entered the city on the 8th along with Colonel Hastings, drained the moat, and for the next ten days kept up a continuous assault upon the place, which held out Grosley,  
of Lic  
p. 177.

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1643.

bravely until the 21st of April, when it was forced to capitulate. The city remained faithful to the king throughout, and was held by the Royalists until July, 1646.

In an Ordinance of the Lords and Commons issued May 10th, 1643, the sums to be raised in Staffs. were :—

Staffs.	..	...	..	212	10	0
Lichfield	...	...	...	5	0	0
				<hr/>		
				£217		
				<hr/>		
				10		
				0		

Among the Commissioners to expedite this collection was Edward Leigh, Esq.

Hist. of Shen-  
stone, p. 261.

In May, 1643, we find that Captain Henry Jackson, of Wall, who was an active Parliamentary, had assigned to him the weekly pay of Walsall Borough and Foreign, together with that of Barr, Aldridge, and Bentley. And on the 25th June, 1643, the gallant little garrison at Tamworth Castle, after enduring a siege of two days, was compelled to surrender.

Hist. of Tam-  
worth, p. 120.

In the month of July, 1643, the town received a visit from Queen Henrietta Maria, who had lately landed from Holland. "She sailed in the middle of February, but soon left Burlington for York, where she stayed some time." She left York with large reinforcements, with the intention of joining the King at Edgehill. Sir William Dugdale, in the "Diary of his Life," has preserved a record of this visit, and quite recently there has been discovered among the Historical Manuscripts at the House of Lords, a letter written by the queen herself from Walsall. Napier, writing afterwards, remarks that "the queen was come to his Majesty with a considerable supply." Clarendon gives the numbers as 2,000 foot, 1,000 horse and 6 pieces of cannon, 2 mortars and 100 wagons; while, according to her own account, these forces must have accompanied her in person. In a letter written from Newark, on June 27th, she enumerates a still larger force: "I carry with me 3,000 foot,

Clarendon,  
Book VI, p.  
165.

pp. 51, 52.

Book VII, p.  
340.

thirty companies of horse and dragoons, six pieces of cannon and two mortars. Harry Germyn commands the forces that go with me as Colonel of my guard, and Sir Alexander Leslie the foot, under him, and Gerard the horse, and Robert Legge the Artillery; and her she majesty generalissimo and extremely diligent, with one hundred and fifty wagons of baggage to govern."

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1643.

On July 3rd the queen left Newark and removed to Bunny, near Nottingham, then the residence of Colonel Parkyns, a devoted Royalist. On the 4th she arrived at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and from here she made a successful attack upon Burton-on-Trent, taking the town and a number of prisoners. On the 7th she arrived at Croxall, and coming by way of Lichfield, then held by Colonel Bagot, she reached Wassal (Walsall) on the 8th. Here, according to tradition, she stayed at the old mansion of the Haws at Caldmore, then occupied by George Haw. This position was an advanced one, and the open upland around would offer a suitable and judicious spot for the encampment of her troops. On the arrival of the queen she writes to the king as follows. The letter is in French, and I use the translation originally given by Mr. Gillespie, who first brought it to light.

Hist. of Th  
bury, p. 1

Hist. of Cr  
p. 131.

"Walsall, Saturday, 8th July (1643).

"MY DEAR HEART. - Progers will have told you about the capture of Burton, which happened after my last letter was written. Our people were much cheered by it, and if it had not been for your express command not to delay, we should have been to Derby, and certainly have taken that town as well. But not to lose time I came here, which place I reached this evening, and I shall stay here to-morrow, because our soldiers are very weary, and also because they have got so much plunder that they cannot well march with their bundles, and I wish them not to leave here, but that they shall have to-morrow for giving them up. Lord Capel will be here by to-morrow, and we shall begin our marching; and, D.V., we shall start on Monday, and go by the road which you told me by Fred" (probably Cornwallis).



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"Sunday, 9th July.

"Whilst writing this letter Parsons has come and brought me your letter. I sent it on instantly to Prince Rupert, to know what he wished me to do, and I have asked him for the state of our Army. I shall not give up my intention to advance to-morrow, if I can get by one of the two roads. I believe you have not had any news from Scotland for a long time. I send you a letter which will tell you something from there. I meant to send it by Progers, but I forgot to do so. The letters which I have received from France assure me that you will have from that country all the help you desire. Madame de Chevreuse rules everything there, and she has declared herself your agent. Watts says there is no necessity to put all this in cipher, and I have been so much distressed that I am giving myself to-day all the rest I can. We were two days without tasting food . . . and since we left Newark I have not been able to get three hours' sleep any night. But with it all I am delighted, because it is borne for you, and it proves to you that in all my doings I have no pleasure except in serving you and being yours."

The letter indicates that the queen was at this time undecided by which road to advance. Birmingham was antagonistic to her, while the Sutton side was traversed by forces of the enemy anxious to intercept or harass her march. Her way, therefore, would lead either through Wednesbury or West Bromwich and Harborne to King's Norton, then one of her own private manors. Reaching here safely on the 10th, she went the following day to Stratford, "where Prince Rupert mett her." "13, Stratford to Wroxton, meeting ye king at ye foote of Edgehill." The sequel is well known, and need not be dwelt upon here. Henrietta Maria has been described as a beautiful woman, "nimble and quiet, black eyed, brown haired, and in a word, a brave lady."

Dugdale,  
"Diary,"  
pp. 51, 52.

On September 7th, 1643, Eccleshall Castle was besieged by Sir William Brereton; and Colonel Hastings, who advanced from Ashby to relieve it, was defeated and obliged to retreat to Tutbury. About this time also Chillington House was taken by Col. Levison, while Captain Stone was not idle, for we learn that "the wife of Captain Gerard Fowke suffered in the loss of her castle and private property, which were seized by Captain Henry Stone, and she was severely fined."

Hist. of Shen-  
stone, p. 172.

A Parliament paper, published December 2nd, 1643, states that Colonel Hastings (of Rushall) was again defeated by the Morelanders, who fell upon him and completely routed his force, he himself escaping back to Ashby. For the remainder of the year the war languished, but the Parliamentary Committee were by no means inactive. On December 11th Captain Stone was ordered to send men to Trentham, to prevent the enemy making a garrison there, and on the 23rd he with others signed the order for the demolition of Stafford Castle.

On December 23rd the Committee, with whom were Captain Stone and Colonel Leigh, despatched Colonel Rugeley to Newcastle, and on the 25th Captain Stone was deputed to deliver iron, &c., at Eccleshall to Mr. Chatwind.

On the 26th, Aston Hall, the residence of Sir Thomas Holt, was attacked by the townspeople of Birmingham, to the number of 1,200. The Hall was finally taken, and Sir Thomas himself imprisoned.

At the commencement of the year 1644, we are again taken back to Rushall, by a pamphlet which reads: "But Sir Thomas might have richer booties than 30 pound of Organ pipes, would he venture his sweet person, like his cousin, Sir Wm. Brereton, whose luggage hath now been met with by Colonell Lane, Governor of Rushall House, for his Majesty in Staffordshire. The Rebels (commanded by one Captaine Wagstaffe) went to give it safe convey towards Stafford; but Colonel Lane, with a small party of horse, fell on them at Canock, routed them, and took 9 men prisoners, 60 horses, and 55 packs, wherein were pretty good store of powder and match. Captaine Wagstaffe had a good horse under him, which hereafter he hath good reason to esteeme for the service now done when it came to running; but his Lieutenant Kinnersly was one of the prisoners. Colonel Tinker Fox laboured to rescue them with his small remnant; but (poor Tinker) he mistook both his way and the enemy, and was likely to have followed Colonell

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Meldrum and Major Bosvile, who both were lately buried at London, for their good and faithful service at Alresford."

Hist. of Sutton  
Chase, p. 96.

In January, 1644, Colonel Leigh and Lieutenant-Colonel Chadwick were fined one shilling each, for departing from the Committee without leave; and on February 29th it was ordered by the Committee "that Mr. Fitzherbert's house at Swinnerton, be forthwith demolished by Captain Stone's soldiers."

Memorials of  
Charles I.

On February 14th, 1644, Captain Henry Stone, under Sir Wm. Brereton, Governor of Eccleshall Castle, marched against Patteshull (now the residence of Lord Dartmouth), which he surprised and captured, taking many prisoners together with much arms and ammunition. A contemporary account says "it was strongly fortified, moated, and defended by a Popish garrison; but taking the opportunity when the draw-bridge was let down, he suddenly forced his passage, surprised the sentries, and fell in upon the garrison, fought with them in the house, and took Mr. Ashley, the governor and owner, with divers gentlemen of quality, two Jesuits, and about 60 soldiers prisoners, and possessed the house, arms, ammunition, and good prize." The next day Sir Wm. Brereton wrote to the Parliament, giving further details of Captain Stone's success.

Shaw, v. i, p. 70.

Dr. Burney's  
Collection.

The papers of this time contain many bantering remarks on Col. Fox and his regiment, and the trade of the former, being a tinker, is freely commented on. Thus *Mercurius Britannicus* for the week ending March 12th, 1646, says "*Anlicus* (a Royalist newspaper), begins still upon Sunday, and he hath writ more upon that day, if the reader observe, than almost upon any day of the week. He hath writ a most ungodly exposition upon Colonell Fox, of Staffordshire, and he spent it seems the whole Sabbath from eight in the morning, till four in the afternoon in analysing that Colonell and his Regiment, with all the base and working day language he could divine; I hope the reader will observe that he who

makes no conscience of dayes, will make a little of intelligence, and he that cares not when he writes, will not care what he writes, but the Sabbath blasphemy is enough to sinke the sheet without the weight of my pen, but we now to their eternall infamy at Oxford, print their lyes upon their own dayes. And first for his lies upon the Sabbath Day. That Colonell Fox was a Tinker, &c. Now the truth is the Colonell hath so much metall, that *Julius* conceits he must needs be of a brazen or copper profession and searching among the Trades, he hath pitched upon this, for I have jeered him out of Tailors and Haberdashers and Felt makers, and now he hath fallen among Tinkers."

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On March 30th, 1644, a letter from "Sturbridge" gives an account of the capture of Stourton Castle by the same Colonel Fox, with 200 horse and 200 foot. Following up his success the Colonel marched upon Evesham and Brandroffe, both of which he took early in May. On the 3rd of this month he left Tamworth with about 64 men and marched to Bewdley, a garrison of the king's. Reaching here at night he gained an entrance by stratagem, and took both officers and men prisoners. From here he went to Ticknell Manor House, and took prisoners Sir Thomas Lyttleton and other gentlemen. The best account of this affair is given by Vicars in his "God's Ark."

Hist. of Bewd-  
ley, p. 301.

Hamper, "Life  
of Dugdale."

Here we may note that on April 16th, the weekly pay of Chaulton, Eccleshall, &c., was assigned to Capt. Stone for payment of his officers and soldiers.

In another record we have the following: "By the Committee at Stafford, 17th May, 1644, it is ordered that Lieutenant Hill in the march with the convoy to Bermingham, do seize upon all the horses and cattell of Thomas Lane, Esq., of Bentley, or any other malignant thereabouts, and theyr cattel so seized to make sale of if they can at Bermingham, and to return the monies to the Com."

Minute Book.

A few days later Colonel Fox found himself face to

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face with Colonel Lane, of Rushall. The *Parliament Scout* for May 23rd, 1644, says: "For Colonell Fox his actions, though many speak him valiant, we shall not repeat any but one, which at this instant comes to our knowledge and done by his souldiers, while he was come for London with Sir Thomas Lyttleton, a great Array man for the County of Worcester," and thus it is related -- "The enemy being enraged for the surprise of Sir Thomas Lyttleton would needs take revenge, and one Col. Lane, who keeps a garrison in Rushall Hall for the king, was to act it, who with 100 men himselfe in person, would needs plunder Brumagum and surprise some of Col. Foxe's men therein. There was neere the towne of the Colonell's men only Scout Master Cash, and Quarter Master Burbage, and 6 Common Troopers. Col. Lane comes a back way with part of his 100 and leaves the rest for reserve. Col. Fox his men seeing the enemy, thought not of a reserve, but the Quarter Master, who commanded the rest, cryd let us fall upon them and die all rather than suffer the towne to be plundered or ourselves to be made prisoners, and accordingly charged them through and through, killed Captain Dudley and some others; took prisoner Captaine Fisher, son to Sir Robert Fisher, and made all the rest flie, with the losse of one of their eight men, who was mortally wounded, but not yet dead. After this Captaine Fisher was to be carried a prisoner by Captain Tetman to Coventry. Col. Lane pursued after to regain the prisoner, but some of Col. Fox his men pursued Lane, so that he hardly escaped; if it be said that this was an action of Col. Fox his men, and speaks no valour to Col. Fox; it is answered they that say so, understand not the way of commendation in armes; if the men be so valliant what is the Colonel! did they fight so he absent what would they be present?"

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Another paper dated May 23rd, 1644, gives an account of a skirmish near Birmingham between a party of troopers belonging to Colonel Fox and a

number of Royalists. The latter was driven out of the town and fled in the direction of Tamworth.

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We now reach another momentous episode, in the capture of Rushall by the forces of the Parliament. During the month of May it was invested by Basil, Earl of Denbigh. This nobleman, whose father fell at the skirmish at Birmingham, was one of the most eminent commanders on the side of the Parliament, and was head of the committee of the latter, which was held at Coventry.

Clifford, "Hist  
of Tixall,"  
p. 222.

On May 10th, 1644, the Earl, with a force of about 2,000 men, marched from Coventry towards Tamworth. From here it would seem that he came to Rushall, which after a vigorous defence surrendered on May 22nd. Traditon relates that the camp of the besieging army was thrown up on Ryecroft Hill, and some years ago, in confirmation of this tradition a cannon ball weighing 12lbs. was dug up here. One account of this event says: "The Earl of Denbigh took Russell [Rushall] House in Staffordshire, and in it Col. Lane and divers officers, with 200 prisoners and their arms, and £10,000 of goods, and so opened the passage between Coventry and London. The stout Morelanders joined with him."

Pitt's  
"Stafford-  
shire," p. 118

Memorials of  
Charles I.,  
p. 85.

*The True Informer*, of June 1st, 1644, says: "STAFFORDSHIRE.—We had certain intelligence that Rushall Hall in Staffordshire was surrendered to the Earl of Denbigh, who behaved himself very gallantly in the taking therof. There was therein Colonell Lane and divers other commanders. They took in the house above ten thousand pounds worth of goods and wares that had been plundered from the Carriers, coming from London and other parts going towards Lancashire, that being observed to have been one of the most thieving garrisons of the Cavaliers in all that County, in that they have sometimes taken seven score packs at a time from the Carriers, so that this service will much advantage the Country, both in regard they may have more free passage for the time to come, and also that a great part of the goods will

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be restored to their owners. We heare furthur that the Earle of Denbigh is gone from thence to beseige Dudley Castle, another garrison of the Cavaliers in that County. He is now about 6,000 strong, 1,500 Morelanders being lately joyned with his army, and it is thought that Col. Fox will also joyn with him, the better to carry on the affairs of Parliament in those parts." Further on the same paper says: "It is certified out of Staffordshire that Colonell Lane, with a partie of the Lord Capell's Rob-carrier Cavaliers, was lately at Canocke in Staffordshire, neere which place they fell upon some carriers as they passed, plundered them of their goods, took their horse and all from them and carried it away, which Captaine Wagstaffe with a small partie (being nere), endeavoured to rescue out of there hands; but having too small a partie they carried their stolen horses and packs with them, and this they pretend to be for the good of the kingdome and the libertie of the subject."

The following entry evidently refers to the Earl of Denbigh and his movements at this time: "June 5th, 1644.—That those townships, which were warned to bring in carriages to convey the generall to Rushall and Walsall, shall for their contempt and neglect pay the charges and losses those men have suffered and been at that were forced to send their armes to convey the said earle thither."

Hist. of Wednes-  
bury, p. 128.

Among the prisoners taken in Rushall, was William Hopkins, of Oakeswell Hall, at Wednesbury. This gentleman promising obedience to the ordinances of the Parliament was released, but a fine of £195 10s. 6d. was inflicted upon him "for his delinquences."

Memorials of  
Charles I.,  
p. 146.

Captain Tuthill was now made Governor of Rushall, and for the remainder of the year he seems to have had a lively time of it. Thus about this date we learn that "Captaine Stone and Captaine Tuthill, the Governors of Rushall Hall, which was then governed for the Parliament, fell upon a party of the king's near Lichfield, took Major Henningham,

and the gentlemen and officers of the name of Devereux, 25 common souldiers, 40 horse and armes, a coach and horses, divers portmantles, and good pillage."

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On 12th June, 1644, there was a great fight at Dudley, in which, however, neither party gained much advantage. The Governour was Lieutenant Colonel Beaumont, and the castle was besieged by the Earl of Denbigh, Sir Thomas Myddleton, Colonel Mytton and a large force. The king, who was at Shrewsbury, hearing of the danger which threatened the castle, despatched Lord Wilmot, the Earl of Northampton, and the Earl of Cleveland, with a brigade of horse and 1,000 foot soldiers to raise the seige. The Parliamentary camp was pitched on West Bromwich Common, where traces of the earthworks might be seen until a recent period. The best account of this battle (which, however, seems to have escaped the notice of the Dudley Historians), is in a letter from a Parliamentary man, and is dated from Walsall on 12th June, 1644. From this we learn that the fight commenced about nine in the morning, that the Royalists were numbered at about 4,000 besides foot, and that the Parliament forces advanced from Tipton Green. The Royalists ambuscaded the hedges and approaches to the castle, but the rebels charging furiously put them to flight, leaving 60 of their number on the field. Lord Denbigh "deported himself with much gallantry," leading the foot and remarking that "he had rather lose ten lives than one piece of his artillerie." The fight lasted from two to five, the rebels losing about 8 men and 20 wounded. "We are now, blessed be God, at Walsall, where we are in expectation of another touch this night." It is but fair to state that the Royalist accounts reverse the success of the affray and also the losses inflicted.

Reeves, "Hist.  
of West Brom-  
wich," p. 156.

Dr. Burney's  
Collection.

On 22nd June, 1644, it was ordered "that the weekly pay of Rushall, Walsall Borough and Foreign, Goscote, Wednesbury, Bentley, &c., be assigned to Capitaine Tuttle, Governor of Rushall, for the pay of his officers and soldiers."

Hist. of Wednes-  
bury, p. 132.



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Memorials of  
Charles I.,  
p. 100.

Shaw, v. i. 68.

On 5th July, 1644, Sir Edward Leigh, of Rushall, signed a petition to Parliament presented by four thousand Staffordshire men, praying "that the differences between the Earl of Denbigh their generall and some of the country might be reconciled and the Earle sent down again amongst them," upon delivery whereof the Colonel made a long harangue to the Commons, and all was referred to a Committee.

On 19th July, 1644, Sir William Brereton obtained the command of Eccleshall Castle, together with the weekly pay of the Hundred of Pirehill. Captain Stone influenced this, and was the only member of the Committee privy to it. A petition was presented to Parliament that the castle might not be severed from the rest of the county, and this was signed by Colonel Edward Leigh and Captain Henry Stone. On 10th August, 1644, the weekly pay of Wolverhampton, Pattingham, &c., was ordered to Colonel Edward Leigh.

The month of September of this year was notable for an attempt which was made to gain over the garrison of Rushall by treachery. A yeoman named Francis Pitt, of Wednesfield, was intrusted by Colonel Levison, the Governor of Dudley Castle, to offer to Captain Tuthill the sum of £2,000, if he would yield up the place to the king. Francis Pitt was 65 years old, and, according to his own statement, "had been a great professor." He held a farm for life from Colonel Levison, "the Papist Governour of Dudley Castle." He was in the habit of going frequently to Rushall, and from this cause was persuaded by Colonel Levison to carry a letter to Captain Tuthill, offering him £2,000 if he would betray and surrender up the castle. Tuthill appeared to give consent to this, with the object of obtaining the release of some prisoners, which having accomplished, he seized Pitt and delivered him up to the Parliament. Colonel Levison, unconscious of this treachery, came according to arrangement to Rushall, but, instead of finding an easy entrance, had two drakes discharged upon his troop, several of whom were killed.

Twamley,  
"Hist. of Dud-  
ley," p. 73.

This occurrence is detailed in a pamphlet entitled "The Discovery of a treacherous design, whereby Colonel Levison (Governor of Dudley Castle), would have seduced Captaine Tuthill to have betrayed Rushall Hall, by proffering him 2,000 pound and all the Letters and Articles between them, their Agents taken, his own prisoners released, and other matters of note related at large. As it was presented by Captaine Tuthill to the Committee of both Kingdomes. Published according to order."

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Salt Library.

"That the enemy is at this time labouring to have many of our garrisons to have beene betrayed is very certaine, and the main sticklers in this plot are Popish Priests. We have lost Croyland, in Lincolnshire, but who is in fault is not yet manifest; for many, I will instance one particular which was acted by Colonel Levison, who ingaged a Popish Priest and one Pit to agitate betweene him and Captaine Tuthill, the Governor of Rushall Hall, under the Earle of Denbigh; but Captaine Tuthill is too cordiall to be drawn into such trechery. First of all, Colonel Levison sends Pit to him to promise him 2,000 pound if he will surrender it, and other large promises. Here followeth the copie of Colonell Levison's first Letter: 'Sir,--The proposition made unto you by this bearer was done by my allowance, and shall be performed in all that he undertakes. If you please to accept of it, it shall be much to your advantage, without the least suspition on your part. I desire to hear from you suddenly, 2,000.

"LEVISON."

"Captaine Tuthill, receiving this letter, adviseth with the rest of the Commanders in the garrison, as appears from this ensuing certificate: "Whereas there hath beene a business long in agitation betweene Colonel Levison and Capt. Tuthill, of Rushall Hall, these are to certifie that there hath beene nothing done in it from the very beginning till we seized upon the Messenger's person, but was done by the advice of all the officers in the House, and the real intent of it was to gaine the men they took from us prisoners, and to endeavor to impoverish them or cut them off, for the confirmation of which we have subscribed our hands.

"JOHN BYWATER.	WILLIAM SHOWER.
"THOMAS FOLLIOT.	DANIEL PRESCOTT.
"LEONARD GIRTE.	JOHN MATLAND.
"EDWARD BANDOLPH."	

### Captain Tuthill's answer to Colonel Levison:

"SIR.--By your tenant Pit I received a Note (as he says) from you. That I may have the better assurance it is your hand, you may be pleased to deliver my prisoners you took last, and no other, for feare of suspition, which will the more confirm me. Blame me not if I be cautious in such a businesse, and upon your second letter we will agree any way and meenes

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how to accomplish both our desires. The prisoners are not all considerable, which makes me demand it of you. There must be a way found out that my men and officers may not suffer, so desiring speedily to hear from you. I take my leave.

"Your servant,

TUTHILL."

Colonel Levison makes the following reply:

"SIR, To let you see I meane to deale plainly with you, I have released your Chyrurgeon, and though I consider not the rest, yet I have detained them lest that delivery should breed suspicion. For the businesse betweene yourself and me, it cannot be brought to effect but by some meeting, which I desire may be suddenly; and if you think fit of this bearer, his house, whither (in regard it is impossible for me to come without suspicion), I will send you a knowne officer, with full commission to treat with you, and whatsoever he shall conclude on shall be faithfully performed, onely as I engage my faith and honour, you shall come and go safe, so I may desire the like engagement from you for him.

"LEVISON."

Captain Tuthill makes the following reply:

"SIR,—I am now absolutely satisfied, and free from doubts by your delivery of my Chyrurgeon; for the other three you tooke, I have directed the bearer how they may be released to-morrow, under pretence that I have given order for the release of the like number and of the same quality in Nantwich, which will free us from the danger of suspicion, which is considerable in so weighty a businesse. For the mane businesse, I am altogether unwilling to commit it into any more hands, but rather desire that you will send me some reasonable Propositions by the bearer, who is faithfull and carefull for both. And because I have many times have heard much of your worth, if they be not too low, I shall accept them; but with all I abhorre (when I have done this) to be slighted, or counted treacherous or mercenary, for I have been seized on as your prisoner; but my officers and souldiers to march away; for you know there are many eyes more upon our motion, and that way of meeting is dangerous, therefore, if this be to your mind, let me know, if not, if you in your wisdom can propound a more probable, I shall be willing to listen to it, in the meantime, till I heare further from you, I rest your servant.

"TUTHILL."

The following Propositions were then sent by Colonel Levison:

"Articles of agreement between Colonell Levison, Governor of Dudley Castle, and Captaine Tuthill, Governour of Rushall Hall, made the 4 day of September, 1644. Sent by Colonell Levison to Captaine Tuthill, to be signed.

"1. It is agreed that Captaine Tuthill shall deliver up Rushall Hall into the Forces of Colonell Levison, on Monday night next, being the 9 of this instant moneth, between the hours of 11 and 12.

"2. It is agreed that Colonell Levison shall give unto the said Captaine Tuthill 2000, of which 200 is immediately to be deposited in the hands of Francis Pit, and to be to him delivered (upon the surrender of the House) unto the said Captaine Tuthill, and also immediately upon the surrender he is to receive from the hands of Colonell Levison the residue of the 2000 pound.

"3. That the Forces of the said Colonell shall not plunder nor take away the goods nor horses belonging unto the said Captaine Tuthill, but if any be taken, that the Colonell allow him a convenient rate for them. For the performance of these conditions the parties above said doe virtually bind themselves, in witness thereof they have set unto their hands."

### Captain Tuthill thus replies :

"SIR, --I conceive you may deliver the 200 pound into my hands and send it by this bearer, upon the receipt whereof I will addresse . . . myselfe to make things ready by Monday next, come seven night; and by the same Messenger send you such an obligation as shall give you satisfaction, and withall I shall desire you will lay down the way you conceive most fit for the accomplishment of the businesse, and with it the very time; and I will go to Coventry to settle all my businesse there, and when the day is prefixt by the consent of both, I will not faile you a minute.

"Yours,

"TUTHILL."

### Articles sent with the same letter :

"1. It is agreed that Captaine Tuthill shall deliver up Rushall Hall Garrison to the Forces of Colonell Levison on Monday night next, being the 9 of this instant month, between the hours of 11 and 12.

"2. It is agreed on that Colonell Levison shall send unto the said Captaine 200 pound, before Friday next, and 1,800 presently, on the receipt of the House.

"3. That the officers shall have their owne horses, armes, and liberty to march to any of the Parliament Garrisons.

"4. That no officer or souldier of Colonell Levison's offer violence to me, my wife and servants; and such goods as they have they are to enjoy without molestation.

"5. That I may enjoy two of my best horses, and my liberty to goe for Ireland, or live in some garrison in security, as I shall make choice of, now in possession of His Majesty's Forces.

"6. That the souldiers, although disarmed, may not be detained prisoners, but may have liberty to march to any garrison of the Parliament's they shall make choice of, and have a sufficient convoy of horse for to secure them.

"7. That the garrison be sleighted."

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To these Articles the following reply is made :

"SIR.—I will deliver to this bearer 200 pound, to be delivered into his hands, untill the condition be performed, upon which you may take from him all possible assurance to deliver it to you, and for the remainder I engage my faith and the reputation of a gentleman (greater assurance I cannot give you), to performe punctually what I promised. The rest I leave to the relation of the bearer, whom I judge capable of the truth.

"Your servant,

"LEVISON."

Again Captain Tuthill replies :

"SIR.—For the first Article, it cannot be excepted against, except you desire it to be done sooner, which I cannot do, by reason of some businesse. For the second, the bearer told me you would deliver him the money, and send me a note under your hand, that he hath it, and directions to give it to me, after you receive the House, and for the Bond of 900 pound, I desire it may be sent me with the Articles, for the other 100 pound, you may please to give it the bearer, which I will allow him out of my money. For the other Articles, they are as when you saw them last, therefore, I conceive I need not speake of them, but desire you would send me those Articles writ and signed with your hand. If you performe your part, I will, on Thursday next at 11 o'clock, stand ready at the Bridge to receive you, or at the corner of the works, there must you bring 40 horse and 40 dragoons, which will be a greater party than I have within. You must come as Colonell Fox, with this word, sending a single man before you, which man I myselve will challenge and ask, "Who is there?" He must say, "Your friend," and I will aske "Whence?" and then he may say, "Denbigh." And if I bid him come on with the partie, you may be confident. Draw them in a single File, for the ground will not permit you to march together. By to-morrow night I expect your resolution. So with my good wishes to the businesse, I take my leave.

"Your humble servant,

"TUTHILL."

"At the same time," proceeds the narrative, "Captain Tuthill, having got his prisoners from Colonell Levison, and seeing he could not safely proceed further, did then apprehend Pit, whom he hath brought up prisoner to London. He also apprehended a Popish Priest that came with him, in agitation from Colonell Levison, and the Horse and Dragoons. Notwithstanding, they not knowing, but that all went on for them, faced Rushall Hall at the time appointed, and an eminent Commander came to the gate and called, "Corporall." Answer was made, "Who is there?" and the enemy said, "A friend." "Who are you for?" said Captain Tuthill, he answered, "Denbigh." Then Captain Tuthill discharged against him with his pistols, and he retreated, and Captain Tuthill discharged his Drakes against the body; some were seen to fall, but the particulars are onely knowne to themselves of what losse they sustained, because none were privie to the same but themselves.

"The Earle of Denbigh (it is hoped) will now suddenly be dispatched; and it is well, for he is so active and noble a generall, that the countrey under his association long for his returne. Finis."

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The Rolls of Parliament contain the following paragraph: "Sunday, 5th October, 1644.—Ordered that Pitt, that endeavoured to prevail with Captain Tothill, Governor of Rushall Castle, to betray the castle and garrison, be referred to the Commissioners for Martiall Law to be tried. And that Captain Tothill do not depart till he be examined upon oath before the Judge Advocate."

"Ordered that fifty pair of pistols, and eight barrells of gunpowder and match proportionable be forthwith delivered out of the stores and magazine to Captain Tothill, Governor of Ruscheshall Castle, for the better defence of that place."

In the *Weekly Account* for 9th October, 1644, we find the sequel of the above treacherous design. "This afternoon the noble Earl of Denbigh and most of the Commissioners for Martiall Law, sate in Guildhall, London. There was called to the Barre one Captain Tuthill, which was charged with some compliancy with the enemy, and after his examination was read, he was demanded what he could say for himselfe, who, denying any matter of fact, was commanded to withdraw, and one Francis Pitt called to the Barre; his charge was betraying Rushall Hall, in the county of Stafford, to the enemy, by letters and otherwise for this purpose, and for their censures and other proceedings therein I shall acquaint you with as things shall be brought to perfection." Subsequently a "Court Martiall" straightly examined all the former passages, and the said Pitt, being found to be a chief actor in the treacherous design, was condemned to be hanged according to "Martiall Law."

Dr. Burney's  
Collection.

London's  
Intelligence.  
Oct. 10th, 1644.

A pamphlet published on 18th October, 1644 (reprinted by W. H. Robinson, Walsall, 1881), is entitled "A more Exact and Perfect Relation of the Treachery, Confession, and Execution, &c., of Francis

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Pitt, who was executed in Smithfield, on Saturday, October 12th, 1644, for endeavouring to betray the Garrison of Rushall Hall, Staff., to the enemy." In one place he says, "I never heard more swearing, nor saw more drunkenness and prophaness, than I saw in the Garrison in Rushall. I'll mention one: The Martiall (I have forgotten his name) he did swear and blaspheme as if he would cause the stones to flie out of the Wals; and after I fell into his hands, he stript me and abused me and used me more like a Jew than a Christian. Now the Lord amend that and other places under the Parliament's command, or else they can never prosper, they can never prosper." In another place he says, in his address to the people before his execution, "Good people, pray for me and help me in remembring me to utter what I should speake. The gentleman that imployed me about this Treachery was the Governour of Dudley Castle, his name is Luson (Leveson), he is my Landlord, I hold a Farm of him (a good one), but 'tis onely for my life; this day I must surrender it. Now the manner of it was thus, He sent for me to come to him, and askt me, what I did so often at Rushall Hall; I told him I had been there but twice of late; once I went to pay money, contribution money; the other time, to redeem my Neighbours Cattle that were taken away: He told me, seeing you have such acquaintance there, I will see whether you will do as much for me; I would fain purchase that Garrison, I will give two thousand pound for it: I went with this Message to the Governour, which was Captain Tuthill, who sent me with Letters back; and so I carried Messages from one to the other; but it was not delivered up. Captain Tuthill promised me, if I could make that bargain, I should have one hundred pounds of the money: yet I never askt him for any; neither had any, save one forty shillings, which he gave me without demand. Colonell Luson did give me no money, but he promised to be as good to me as seven yeers rent."

On 7th November, 1644, it was ordered "that Pirehill Hundred (besides what Captain Stone hath) weekly pay should go to pay ye foote officers and soldiers. Touching the horse, the weekly pay of Seisdon and Offeley (above what is allowed to Rushall and Tamworth) shall be gathered to pay the horse."

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On 7th December, 1644, Sir Edward Leigh was ordered by the Committee to march into Cheshire with his forces, but three days later (December 10th) this order was countermanded, and Colonel Leigh was commissioned to march with Sir William Brereton and be under his command. Also "Captain Tuthill, having taken 200 loades of haye from Colonel Leigh for the use of Rushall garrison, the said Colonel Leigh shall be paid £66 13s. 4d. out of delinquent's rents."

Minute Book.

On 11th December, 1644, occurs the following entry: "Colonel Leigh's men in regard they want bandeliers, and are now to march out to service," and on December 13th, "Col. Leigh, Captain Stone, and others are ordered to consider the forces of the different Garrisons in the countie, and to take care that the assignations may be equally distributed," &c. Several entries of a similar kind occur before the close of the year.

Ibid.

We now enter upon the year 1645, and soon find that Captain Tuthill and his garrison were by no means idle. Shenstone was particularly harrassed by sallies from Stafford and Rushall, and only protected when Lichfield was in Royalist hands.

Hist. of Sutt  
Chase, p. 10

The following letter is taken from the *London Post* of January 7th, 1645:

"SIR.—My services to you and all yours promised. These are to certifie to you that I am making what haste I can into Lancashire, but the wayes have been and are so obstructed, that I am constrained awhile to stay in Rushall garrison, near Walsall, and am desirous to acquaint you with a remarkable exploit performed there during my abode. Notice was given to the governor that a convoy was sent out from Lichfield for the conducting of a Lincolshire knight to the king, whereupon Colonell Tuthill, the active governor, called a party of horse, who met with the convoy of the enemie in their return back. The enemy were nine in number, whereof one was a



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quartermaster, the rest well horsed and armed with pistols, swords, and carbines. Our men made much haste to the service that they were much scattered when they were in first view of the enemy, so that there were but five that first charged them, and before that the rest did come up they had seized on the enemy, not one escaping, and did bring them all into the garrison within two hours after they did sally forth. The knight's name was Sir Robert Tirwhyt, an arch Papist, who, being newly parted from his convoy, narrowly escaped, and our men were so few that they could not divide their party, otherwise we had gotten all the knight carried with him, divers cloak-bags and portmantles, I believe rich prize, had he been taken. I do admire that Rushall garrison is so much neglected, a place very considerable for the safety of the country, and a frontier garrison to Lichfield and Dudley Castle, and yet they want many accommodations. To my apprehension I never observed braver spirits and civiler men in any place where I have served, and the governour hath testified a great measure of fidelity, notwithstanding some temptation to the contrary, which were two thousand pound deep and much gallantry expressed on all designs. Sir, I do wish that his good service may be taken notice of, for the example of others and for his future encouragement. I have almost forgotten another exploit, but I believe that you have already heard of it, which was that a party from Stafford came not long since from Hampton and fell upon Captain Careless, the governour of Tong Castle, and his company, and (it is said) that they have mortally wounded the captain and taken forty horses and many prisoners; also some four daies since some of Colonell Foxe's troop have taken fiftene of Dudley men in Rowley, so that this country of late have done very good service."

Memorials of  
Charles I.,  
p. 195.

In this same month (January), we learn that "Letters from Stafford informed that Captain Stone's troop of an hundred beat up the Lord Molyneux's quarters near Stafford, routed three hundred of the enemy, took three captains and other officers, about an hundred horses and many prisoners, some slain and divers wounded. Order for five hundred pound for Captain Stone for his troop, and fifty pound given to his lieutenant."

Minute Book.

The following order of the Committee bears date January 22nd, 1645: "Whereas Colonel Fox hath done service severall times within the countie, and desires us (the Committee) with a sum of money for his present necessitie, and doth promise to assist us upon request in raysing and levying monies in that part of the countie adjoining to his garrison at Edgebaston, it is therefore ordered that he shall have power to demand and levie within the parish of Areley £66 17s., being three months of arrears of their

weekly pay of £5 11s. 5d., and within the parish of Envile of £78, being three months' arrear of their weekly pay of £6 10s. per week."

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The same minute book of February 20th, 1645, states: "The Earl of Denbigh's carriages conveyed to Rushall and Dudley about May last."

On February 21st Captain Stone is ordered to bring Mr. Beryer, parson of Norbury, before the Committee, "for giving forth in his sermon divers scandalous speeches against the Parliament." His horses and cattle were likewise seized by Captain Stone for the "state service."

Again we find it recorded, on March 10th, 1645, that "Whereas Captain Robert Tuthill, governour of Rushall Garrison, doth inform that the weekly paye assigned to his garrison is not sufficient to mayntaine the forces there, it is ordered that 'for the speedy supply it shall be lawfull for him to collect of the persons subscribing the sum there mentioned, for which they shall have the publique faith of the kingdome, provided the said sums exceed not the xxth part of one year's rent in land.'" The persons

Stow, v. i, p. 71

that are to advance monies according to this order are Richard Stone, de Parke-streete, in pochiâ de Walsall, £10; Thomas Osborne, de eadem, £10; John Couper, de le hill in Walsall, £x.; and others of different parishes, viz., Aldridge, Stonnall, &c.

"Staffordshire, 28th March, 1645. Thomas Crompton did take the oath, which the Parliament hath set forth, and gave it Edward Leigh, Esq., of Rushall, and Henry Stone, of Walsall, members of the Com: for the said Co."

On May 9th, 1645, we read: "The following is a true copy of accompt to John Adcock, of Nether Stonnall, for advancing money to the Parliament:

Stow, v. ii, p. 66

'Forasmuch as John Adcock, of Nether Stonnall, hath advanced, on the proposition of Parliament, the sum of eight pounds, and hath paid the same into the receipt of this garrison of Rushall howæ, theis are therefore to command and charge all officers and soldiers under my command, and to request all other the forces for King and Parliament, not to molest, vex, trouble or offer any violence to the said John Adcock, nor to pillage, plunder,

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or meddle with any of his goods or chattels, he, the said John, still continuing a friend to King and Parliament, and not doing or consenting to the doinge of anything prejudicial to the kingdom or state. Given under my hand at the Garrison of Rushall howse for King and Parliament, this nyynth day of May, 1645. ROBERT TUTHILL."

Memorials of  
Charles I.,  
p. 112.

About May 16th, 1645, Charles was at Wolverhampton. "The king lay at Bisbury (Bushbury), a private, sweet village, when Captain Stone fell upon the rere of the king's army at Wolverhampton, killed 16 and took 26 horse and their riders." "Next day Captain Stone fell upon their quarters at Newport, took 60 horses and killed a captain and 20 others; next day he killed 3, took 4 prisoners and some horses."

Show, v. i, p. 72.

From notes taken by Captain Symonds, and dated May 16th, 1645, we learn that among the Roundhead garrisons of Staffordshire was "Russell (Rushall) Hall. A. Taylour, governour."

Clarendon.

On June 14th was fought the momentous battle of Naseby, and Charles retired the same evening to Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and from thence to Lichfield, Wolverhampton, and Bewdley, "with some disjointed imagination of getting together another army in South Wales."

Dr. Burney's  
Collection.

*Mercurius Veredicus* for June 21st, 1645, says: "By letters out of Staffordshire it is certified that Captain Tuthill, governour of Rushall Hall, lighted upon a partie of the king's, routed them, taking many prisoners." And the same paper for the 28th of June, 1645, says: "It is also certified that Captaine Tuthill, the valliant governour of Rushall Hall, went out with a partie to the very Towne of Lichfield and tooke a Lieutenant and three others prisoners, with three very good Horses. It is much desired for the safety of that Countrey and keeping the way open betwixt London and the North-West parts of the kingdome, that the Garrison of Rushall were more countenanced and the number of Horse therein augmented."

The following letter from Captain Tuthill to Captain Stone is also interesting. It is taken from

a newspaper of the day, entitled *Heads of the Civic Scout from the Armie, 19 Aug., 1645*:

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"The scout from Stafford brings a coppie of a letter from Captaine Tuthill, the Governour of Rushall Hall, to Captain Stone, at Stafford, which is verbatim, thus: 'Captain Stone.—I have just now received intelligence from a man of quality that the king is come to Bridgenorth this night, and with him 3,000 horse. His designe is thought to be for the North; these are therefore, if you bee doubtful of your strength at Titbury (Tutbury), to intreate you speedily to send them intelligence, that they may be either provided to fight or secure themselves. Do not take this to be uncertaine reports, for I have had it from a good hand. The next newes is, that some forces for us have lately landed at Milford Haven, joyned with Langhorne and fallen upon Gerhard's forces, taken 4 pieces of ordnance and all his carriages, the infantry routed, but the cavalrie escaped. This I have likewise from the same man. Your servant, TUTHILL. Rushall Hall, 8th of August, 1645. Haste, haste.'"

The tidings contained in this letter were partly correct. The king came to Lichfield two days after (August 10th, 1645), and stayed until the 12th. On October 2nd he again came from Bridgnorth to Lichfield to supper, and stayed one night, proceeding the following day to Newark. The Parliamentary forces, aided by the garrisons at Tamworth and Rushall, now closed upon Lichfield, which, after a vigorous defence, surrendered on July 10th, 1646. Captain Stone and his troop still continued busy in pursuit of recusants. He seems afterwards to have become governour of Stafford, and it was from him that the Lady Jane Lane procured the pass which she subsequently used so well with the unfortunate Charles II.

Harwood,  
"Lichfield,"  
pp. 30, 306.

Hist. of Tam-  
worth, p. 127.

Boscobel Tracts  
p. 202.

Thus died out the last resistance to the Parliament so far as Staffordshire was concerned, and the country rapidly resumed its ordinary peaceful condition, though ruined walls and despoiled churches long remained as witnesses to the fanaticism and barbarous excesses of the conflict. The cathedral at Lichfield was irreparably injured, while no less than sixty-seven grave stones were robbed of their brass inscriptions. Organs, monuments, and valuable deeds were alike carried away and destroyed. The church at

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Wolverhampton was plundered, while Walsall beyond doubt suffered in much the same manner. It may be presumed with tolerable certainty that many valuable documents and records also disappeared. Early deeds relating to the Grammar School, the Guilds, the Church, and the town itself, which must have existed but which are now not to be found.

Record Office.

The "Royalist Composition Papers" of this time contain the names of several of the local gentry upon whom "fines" were levied in consequence of their adherence to the cause of the king. George Hawe, of Colmore, petitions "that he left the place of his habitation and went and lived in Lychfield, where he voluntarily contributed towards the maintenance and support of the king's party against the Parliament. That John and Thomas, his sons, did likewise until about a year ago, at which tyme they laid down their arms and took the National Covenant." A further paper gives particulars of the lands, &c., of George Hawe, the annual value of which, in times of peace, was set down at £96 0s. 8d. "Out of which he pays to his eldest son, George Hawe, who hath constantly inhabited in the Parliament Quarters, the sum of £40 per annum settled upon him at his marriage, thus leaving £56 0s. 8d." On August 6th, 1646, a fine was inflicted of £212.

Another lengthy petition is from the descendants of Sir Edward Montfort, of Bescott, whose annuities were stopped "on account of the recusancy of Mr. Symon Montfort in 1640."

The estate of Hugh Hill, son of John Hill, of Goscote, is also among those sequestered in 1646.

Thomas Lane, of Bentley, was fined £252 16s., and subscribed to the National Covenant on August 4th, 1646. His son, Colonel John Lane, compounded at the same time for £225. He was among the prisoners taken by the Parliament in the castle of Ashby-de-la-Zouch. About the same time "it is ordered by the committee at Stafford that Mrs. Lane, wife of Thomas Lane, of Bentley, a delinquent, for

£66 13s. 4d., to be paid to the treasurer at Stafford, shall hold and enjoy all her husband's personall estates in the county without any furthur composition, &c. And Mrs. Lane shall have a protection for the security of her person to live at Bentley without molestation, she not doing anything prejudiciall to the Parliament. In consideration Mrs. Lane shall allowe Captaine Tuthill, governor of Rushall Garrison, thirty stacks of coles for his garrison, which he is to fetch from Bentley Haye."

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Another Royalist name deserving of notice is that of Marc' Antonio Cæsar Galliardello, who was a solicitor and Town Clerk of Walsall in 1660. His father was an Italian musician, who settled in London, and his burial is recorded in the register of Holy Trinity, Minories: "Mr. Mark Anthony Galliardello, musician and sarvant to y<sup>e</sup> Queen's Majestie, was buried in good name and fame and most godly respect of all his neighbours y<sup>e</sup> 17 day of June, 1585." His son is said to have been "a trusted agent of the Staffordshire Royalists," and the "Composition Papers" describe him as "of Codsall, in the Co. of Stafford, gent." The Walsall registers contain numerous entries to members of the family, who do not, however, appear to have permanently settled in the town.

Salt Collections,  
v. v, pt. 2,  
p. 163.

The various strongholds in the neighbourhood were dismantled about this time by the order of Cromwell. Dudley Castle, which had been quietly surrendered to the Parliament in May, 1646, was 'sleighted' by order of the House of Commons on July 18th. Tamworth Castle was demolished about the same time, and Rushall in all probability shared the same fate. Several cannon balls have been turned up as memorials of this time. One, twelve pounds weight, was found in a piece of timber, another three pounds at Ryecroft, and another some years ago in cutting a trench in a field between the church and the Lichfield Road.

Booker, "Hist.  
of Dudley  
Castle," p. 96.

Note in Shaw,  
Walsall Free  
Library.

The following Warrant, first brought to light by

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Mr. Gillespie, is in the possession of Lord Hatherton, and is dated 1646-7:

TO THE CONSTABLE, CHURCHWARDENS, AND HEADBOROUGH  
OF WALSALL BORROUGH, RUSHALL AND GOSCOTE, CAN-  
NOCK, NORTON AND WYRLEY.

"By virtue of severall ordinances of Parliament and a Commission to us, and others directed, wee doe hereby will and require you and every of you. That forthwith you make dilligent inquire what ~~sones~~ of money, Plate, Horses, Armes, Amunition, household Stuffe, goods of all sortes, Rentes and profits of lands, woods, freequarter and provision of all kinds, have bine received, taken, collected, rayzed, seized, or sequestred within your Constablewick, by vertue or colour of any Act or Ordinance of this present Parliament, or upon any pretence for the publike service, and from whome the same have bine so received or taken, and to whome paid or delivered, together with the true valews of them. And for the better and more effectuall pceeding in this inquire, you are to call to your assistance all such as can informe anything materiall touching the pmisses, particularly all those that since Miccellmas, 1640, have been employed as petty constables or otherwise, in collecting any of the saide assessments, Receipts, acquittances, Inventories, or other writings concerning the same, to which end you are to leave notice in writing at every dwelling house in yor Constablewick, requiring the inhabitants to bring in their saide information at a tyme and place to be by you appoynted, and letting them know that if anyone shall willfully refuse so to doe, he is by ordinance of Parliament from thenceforth disabled to demande the benefitte of the publike faith for all such monies, freequarter, or other goods, as hee shall so omit to informe of, besydes ye penalty of fine, imprisonment, and sequestration, weh in such case wee have power to inflict, and after such inquire made, as aforesaid, ye are to enter into a booke, fairly to be written and subscribed with your names, all the pticulars above mentioned, and the saide booke to returne to us, upon Tensday, the first day of June, by 9 of the clock in the morning, at the house of Mr. Sherwyn, in Walsall, at the 3 Swans, y<sup>t</sup> thereby wee may be the better enabled for ye ordering and expediting those accounts, by us to be taken, according to the trust in us reposed, and soo both you and wee may be instruments in part, to helpe forward the payment of the publike detts of the Kingdome, and the sooner to ease our Country and ourselves of all such taxes, that must otherw<sup>ise</sup> necessarily be continued upon us. Hereof therefore you may not fayle, given under our hands the 24th day of March, in the yeare of our Lord God, 1646.

"EDWARD BROUGHAM,

"RICH. FLYER,

"MICH. BUDDULPH,

"THO. SNEAD."

"I am commanded by these Commissioners to send their warrants unto you, y<sup>t</sup> you may take notice of the same, and afterwards you are hereby required to send the same unto the other Constables whome it doth concerne. Dated at Wednesburri, April ye 20th. 1647. By mee John Carter, High Constable.

With the seizure of the king in February, 1647, the Civil War came to an end, peace settled down upon the country, and the local actors in the drama disappear from our view. A few words must, however, be devoted to Sir Edward Leigh. By the "Self-Denying Ordinance" which was passed on April 5th, 1645, he would be excluded from his command in the army, and it is most likely that he returned to London and used his efforts to strengthen the cause of the Presbyterian party; for on December 2nd, 1648, he voted, along with the intrepid Hollis, "that the seizing of the king by the army, and his imprisonment in Hurst Castle, was without the advice and consent of the House;" and again, on the 5th, the Presbyterian majority voted that "the concessions of the king to the propositions of the Parliament were sufficient grounds for settling the peace of the kingdom." But this was the last straw, for 20,000 men had vowed that they would purge the Assembly, and on the following day Colonels Rich and Pride, the one with a regiment of horse, the other with one of foot, surrounded the House. Colonel Pride stood in the Lobby, with a list of names in his hand, and as the obnoxious members passed out of the House, they were seized and sent away as prisoners to various places. Sir Edward Leigh was among the number, and was sent, along with others, to a low room, which passed by the name of "Hell." The circumstance is thus noticed by Sir William Dugdale: "Of whose names Mr. Hugh Peters (one of their hot-headed preachers) came to take a list, and then conveyed them into their great Victualling House near Westminster Hall, called Hell, where they kept them all night without any beds. Whence being driven as Prisoners (through snow and rain) by the Guards to several inns in the Strand; the souldiers upbraided them in their passage; that they were the men who had consened the state of their money and kept back the armies pay. Which signal act hapned the very day that their great master, Oliver Cromwell, return'd

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Pict. History,  
v. iii, p. 387.

View of late  
Troubles,  
p. 365.



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from Scotland to London." Sir Edward is said to have been confined at the King's Head, in the Strand, and it does not appear that he was among the few members who were allowed to resume their seats after the execution of the king.

Sir Edward seems now to have withdrawn altogether from public life, and to have devoted himself to the publication and revision of his books. The last we hear of him is in 1665, the year of the Great Plague, when the Parliament was driven from London to Oxford. He travelled into France, where he stayed for six months. Sir Edward died in 1671, at the ripe age of 69, and was buried in the chancel of Rushall Church, of which it is related that he built the north chapel.

Boscobel Tracts,  
p. 97.

The year 1651 was an eventful one in the life of King Charles II. Despite his disastrous defeat at Dunbar, he yet determined to march his army into England, and arrived at the town of Worcester on the 22nd August. The Walsall Royalists, under the command of Colonel John Lane, an elder son of Thomas Lane of Bentley, hastened to the support of their sovereign, and tradition records that they started from the Woolpack Inn in Digbeth. They were not fated, however, to reach the scene of action, for two days later occurred the defeat at Worcester (September 3rd, 1651), and the country was filled with fugitives from the battle. When the king was afterwards at Bentley he was told by Lord Wilmot of this intended service by Colonel Lane.

Midland  
Magazine,  
p. 153.

"The Woolpack of that date," says Mr. Owen, "occupied the whole of the pile of which it now forms a part, while the entire front was timbered, as indeed it is now, only the greater part is hidden behind a mass of brickwork. In front of the Inn was evidently an open space, which possibly gave rise to the name of the 'Square,' which now incongruously clings to the adjacent narrow passage." It is more probable, however, that the Square was originally the open space on the east side of the passage, and

in front of the row of cottages which look southwards. A reference to the plan will show that it was formerly much wider at that point than at present.

The defeat at Worcester, and the romantic wanderings of Charles II. after that battle, are matters of history, but his famous visit to Bentley Hall deserves more than a passing notice.

We have several accounts of his adventures at this period, all of which, however, differ in many of their details. One is by Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, and is given by Glew in his history of the town. Another is by the king himself, and was dictated to Mr. Pepys in October, 1680, at the request of the Duke of York. This scarce tract is in the library of Magdalen College, Cambridge, and may be found at length in the *Monthly Magazine* for 1810. A third account is given by Plot from the "Life of Mr. Whitgreave" himself; while another was published in a little work called "Boscobel," brought out in the year of the Restoration. After narrating the wanderings of the defeated monarch from the streets of Worcester to the house of Richard Penderel at Boscobel, and from thence to Moseley Hall, an old timber-built house of the Whitgreaves, where Lord Wilmot, afterwards Earl of Rochester, was concealed, the account of the king thus proceeds: "Here I spoke with my Lord Wilmot (he came from Bentley, where he was in hiding), and sent him away to Colonel Lane's, about five or six miles off, to see what means could be found for my escaping towards London, who told my lord, after some consultation thereon, that he had a sister that had a very fair pretence for going hard by Bristol to a cousin of hers that was married to one Mr. Norton, who lived two or three miles beyond Bristol, on the Somersetshire side, and she might carry me there as her man, and from Bristol I might find shipping to get out of England. So the next night I went to Colonel Lane's, where I changed my clothes into a little better habbit, like a serving man, being a kind of gray cloth suit, and the next day

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p. 555.

Vol. xxx, p. 140.

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Colonel Tracts,  
245.

Mrs. Lane and I took our journey towards Bristol." Another account says: "On Tuesday night, between twelve and one of the clock, the Lord Wilmot sent Colonel Lane to attend his Majesty to Bentley. The night was both cold and dark, and his Majesty's cloathing thin; therefore Mr. Huddleston humbly offered his Majesty a cloak, which he was pleased to accept and wore to Bentley, from whence Mr. Huddleston afterwards received it."

Plot, p. 307.

On the king's arrival at Bentley (September 10th), he was disguised in a country fellow's habit, with a pair of ordinary grey cloth breeches and leathern doublet, and a green jerkin, together with a noggin coarse shirt. His face and hands were blackened with soot from the back of the chimney, and his skin stained with walnut leaves, his long hair was cut short, his shoes he had been obliged to cast away, and "so sorely wounded were his feet with thorns and stones, that he had many times cast himself upon the ground in desperation, obstinately refusing to proceed." Plot's narrative runs thus: "After his Majesty had eaten and conferred with my Lord and the Colonell about his intended journey toward Bristol next morning, he went to bed, where he rested not long, being called up by the Colonell by break of day, who, takeing away his leather doublet and patch't and green breeches, now cloathed him with a suit and cloak of country grey cloth, like a farmer's son, puting 20 pounds in his pocket to bear the charges of his journey. Being thus accoutred, after he had refresht himself and taken leave of Lord Wilmot, he was conducted by the Collonel a back way into the stable, where, after a few instructions how to act the part of a tenant's son (which they thought a quality more convenient for their intention than that of a direct servant), he brought the horse to the gate, with his hat under his arme, having assumed the name of Willian Jackson, and took up Mrs. Jane Lane behinde him, and so in company with Mr. Henry Lassels, Mr. Peter and his wife, the Collonel's sister,

who were then accidentally at his house and were now going homewards, they took their journey toward Stratford, taking leave of Bentley."

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In the account given by Clarendon it states that the king remained at Bentley "in quiet and blessed security for many days," receiving all possible attention and every information respecting the state of the country. He began, however, to get alarmed when a proclamation was issued offering a thousand pounds for his apprehension. "Upon this matter he communicated with those of this family who took so warm an interest in his behalf—namely, the old gentleman (the father), a very grave and venerable person; the colonel (his eldest son, a man very plain in his discourse and behaviour, but of fearless courage and integrity superior to every temptation); and a daughter of the house, of very good wit and discretion and very fit to bear any part in such a trust." Colonel Lane having obtained, from Captain Henry Stone, governor of Stafford, a pass for his sister Jane and a servant to visit her married cousin near Bristol, she set forth riding behind the king, who was fitted "with clothes and boots for such service." The colonel followed with a hawk and some dogs, and thus the small cavalcade passed on towards Bristol. After enduring for two months the utmost fatigue and innumerable dangers, the king finally succeeded in making good his escape from the coast near Brighton to France.

Boscobel Tract.  
292.

About the middle of December, 1651, Colonel Lane and his sister, to avoid the consequences to which their loyalty might expose them, took refuge in France. The incident is related in a small tract in the British Museum, which relates that "she disguised herself in the habit of a country wench, that trots on foot (to save her life, which she was like to loose for having formerly saved his sacred majestie's) quite crosse the country to Yarmouth, where she found shipping, which conveyed her safe to France. Great search, after her departure, there was made for her,

Ibid, pp. 85-86

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but in vain, which so incensed the soldiers that they burnt down to the ground that poor cottage where his majesty first took shelter after his escape from Worcester." On arriving at Paris the king met her with the expression "Welcome, my life," and she was entertained "with the applause and wonder of the whole court."

There can be but little doubt that but for the timely exertions of the Lane family the hunted monarch would have lost his liberty, and perhaps his life. With every avenue of escape closed, with a heavy premium offered for his capture, and with the certainty of his hiding place being speedily discovered, it needed not only the calm heroism of a devoted woman, but also the utmost craft and design, on the part of herself and her several relations, to thread a path of safety amid so many difficulties and perils. Nor was the king indifferent to the devotion displayed, for upon his restoration he bestowed honours and pensions upon this family. The House of Commons conferred upon Jane Lane the sum of £1,000 to buy her a jewel, together with a pension of £1,000 and a gold watch. Her father, Thomas Lane, was also rewarded with a pension of £500. It would, however, appear from a petition of the Lady Jane Lane, now Fisher, presented to the House of Commons in 1689, that these pensions were not very regularly paid. They were discontinued by William III., and afterwards only paid for about three years in the latter part of Queen Ann's reign.

Salt Coll., v. i,  
p. 329.

The Lane family were allowed an augmentation of a Canton of England to their coat of arms, and were also offered the privilege of interment at Westminster, an honour which, however, was declined, and the colonel was buried among his ancestors in the Lane Chapel in Wolverhampton Church in 1687. Thomas Lane, the father, died in 1660, and Richard Lane, the younger son, became Groom of the Chambers to Charles II., while Mistress Jane Lane, who featured, it is said, Queen Anne Boleyn, and whose picture was

painted by Sir Peter Lely, subsequently married a distinguished cavalier, Sir Clement Fisher, of Packington, and lived until 1689. Colonel Lane's estate was at this time valued at £700, and his name was one of those included in a proposed new order, designed by Charles, of "Knights of the Royal Oak."

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A picture of Bentley Hall as it stood at this time is preserved in both Plot and Shaw, and a small portion of the original remains, encased by the present building, which was erected, it is said, out of the Royal grants allowed to the Lane family. The stables are also stated to be part of the old structure. On the wainscot of the early building was a true measure of the hand of Walter Parsons, the giant, of West Bromwich. So late as 1735 Bentley Park was stocked with deer. The family of Lane is now seated at King's Bromley Manor, near Lichfield, while Bentley has passed through various hands to the Earl of Lichfield.

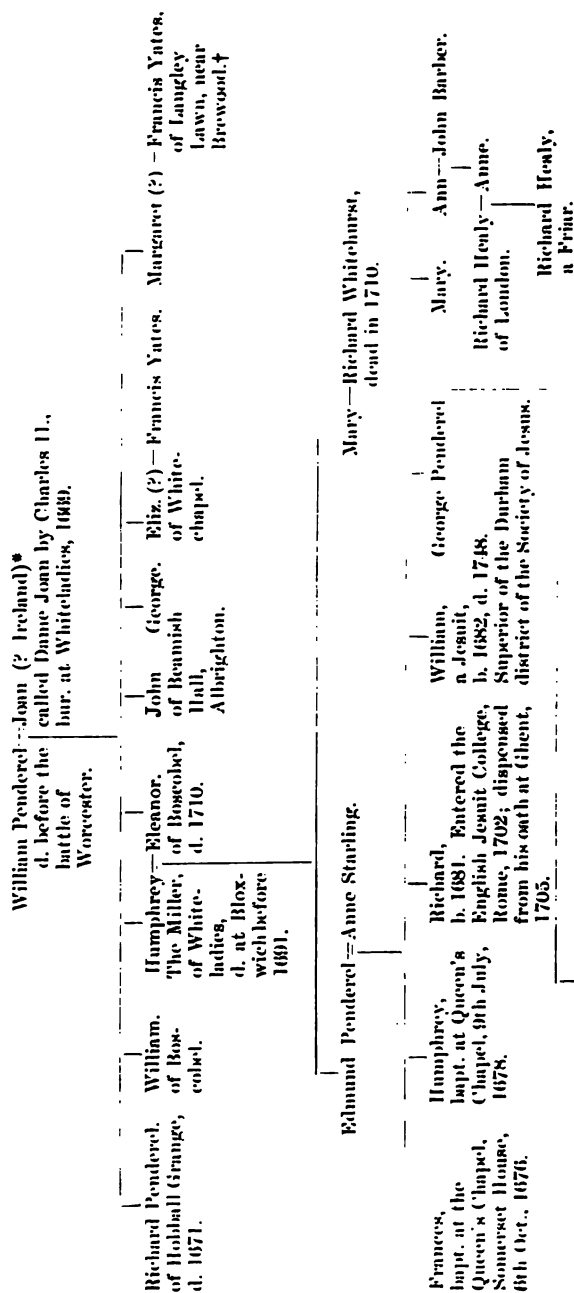
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Edition 1811.

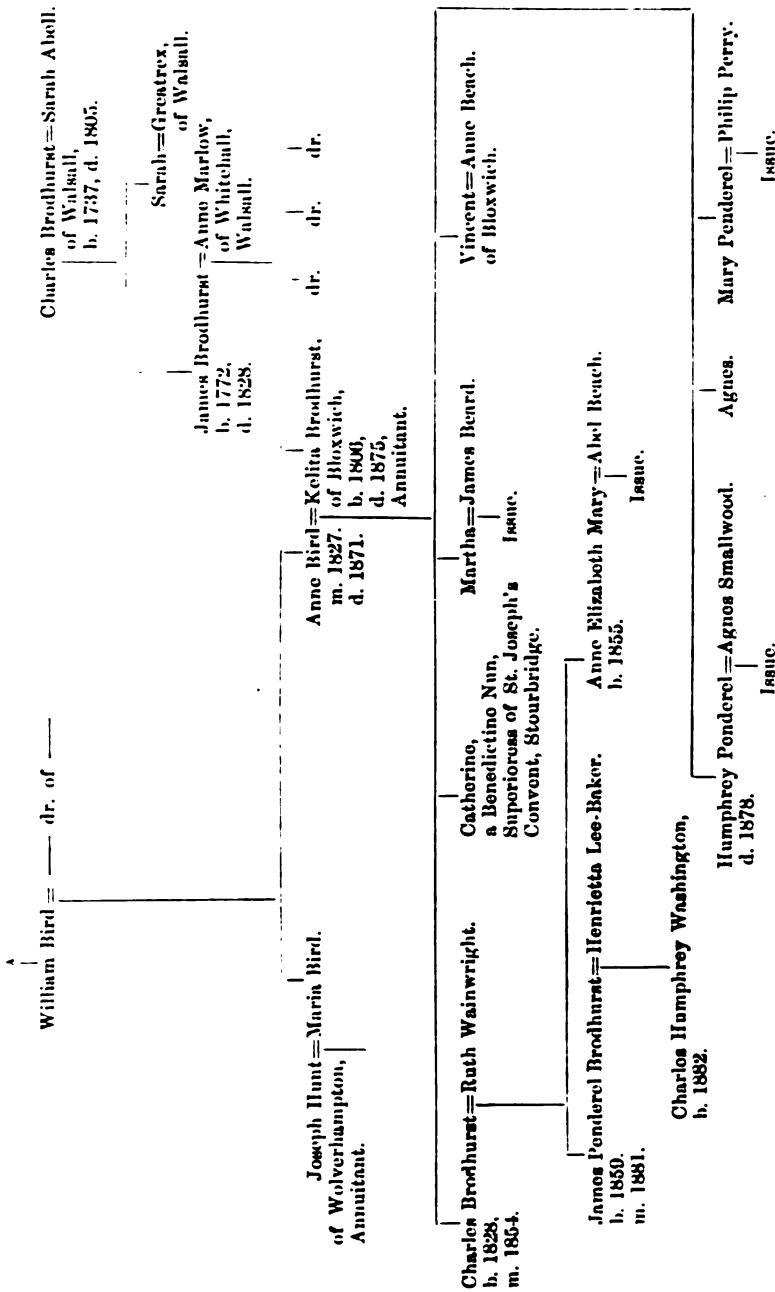
The Penderel family was afterwards suspected of being concerned in the escape of the king, and William Penderel was twice questioned on the same account at Shrewsbury by Captain Fox; whilst Richard "was much threatened by a peevish neighbour at White Ladies; but neither threats nor temptations were able to batter the fort of their loyalty." Soon after the Restoration the five Penderels "were received with distinction by the king at Whitehall, and dismissed with a suitable reward." In the accounts of secret service money disbursed for the Crown during ten years terminating A.D. 1688, upwards of £1,800 is entered as paid to different members of the Penderel family. The Penderel-Brodhursts of Walsall, who still inherit certain annuities, trace their descent through Humphrey Penderel the miller.

Boscobel Tract.  
p. 250.

GENERAL-  
HISTORY.  
1651.

# PEDIGREE OF HUMPHREY PENDEREL.





• "Jane Jean" is conjectured to have been the sister of Father William Ireland, S.J., who has already been declared "Venerable" by the Sacred Congregation of Rites, and is about to be declared a Saint. He is known to have been closely related to the Penderels, He was executed for his supposed complicity in the Popish Plot; but his innocence has since been recognised.

M. Washington, the present French Ambassador to the Court of St. James's, is lineally descended from this marriage.



GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1651.  
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In the State Papers of this period the Lane family is frequently mentioned.

Thus, in 1663, the country was still much disaffected, and risings of the rebels were daily apprehended. Colonel John Lane is spoken of, on May 26th, as sending "information of dangerous consequence lately given by a person of quality, and thinks that cognizance should be taken of all persons suspected to be in the design." Four days later we learn that "Colonel Lane has allowed Matthew Moreton, of Ingleton, to engage for a more perfect discovery of this same design, and Lane has acquainted Lord Brooke and many deputies with the business." These and many other evidences tend to show the unsettled state of the country, a condition which continued till long after the reign of Charles II.

The pages of Plot, who visited Walsall in 1680, contain some allusions to the Lane family, and to several remarkable natural phenomena of the time.

Plot, p. 3.

Colonel John Lane and Mr. Persehouse, of Nether Gournal, walking between Bentley and Willingsworth, are reported to have seen "Parelia, or Mock Suns, in the west, the sun not above half an hour high, standing in a line parallel to the horizon."

Ibid, p. 116.

Again, "Thomas Lane, Esq., of Bentley, while endeavouring to help a friend and kinsman of his (one Mr. Jones) who casually fell into a ditch in Bescot grounds in the night time, and having stirred the mud and dirt pretty much in performing that good office, they presently found their gloves, bridles and horses, as far as the water or dirt had touch't them, all in a kind of faint flame, much like that (as he described it) of burnt brandy, which continued upon them for a mile's riding." The worthy doctor devotes several pages to an explanation of this curious circumstance.

Ibid, p. 135.

P. 212.

Further on he describes some sand pebbles found at Bentley, and also an "old witch elm growing on Powk Hill, near Bentley Hall, that has embraced and lifted up from the ground, with the growth of its root, a great stone of at least 200 weight." In the quarry

itself he describes a hard shining black stone, which  
 "burnt and powdered makes a very good emery."  
 The quarry consisted, for there is now but little left,  
 of basaltic columns of the same kind as Rowley rag.  
 They were pentagonal in shape, and rose up to a  
 height of twenty feet, bending over as if to a common  
 centre. An old engraving of the quarry, shewing  
 the peculiar disposition of the column, may be seen in  
 Hawk's Smith. Many fossils have been found here,  
 including a huge fossil fish (*Megalictrys Hibberti*),  
 which is now in the British Museum.

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H.  
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Plot also mentions an aluminous well at the house  
 of Mr. John Cumberlege, then (1680) Mayor of  
 Walsall. As another natural phenomenon he mentions  
 a calf that was born at "Roycroft," in the parish of  
 Rushall, "which was a yard and an inch high and 2  
 days old, and had horns on its head and milk in its  
 elder."

Once more resuming our history, we find that in  
 1660 the unpopular tax known as "Hearth Money"  
 was levied, amounting to two shillings for every  
 hearth, in all houses paying to church and poor.  
 Walsall contributed the sum of £56 14s. for 375  
 hearths in the Borough and 192 in the Foreign. In  
 this same year (1660), Francis Walsall was appointed  
 a Prebend of Westminster Abbey.

Smitt  
of  
ster  
p. 2

Another insight into the domestic history of  
 this time is gained from a document quoted at length  
 by Mr. Glew. It is entitled "The Account of Henrye  
 Wood, Constable of Walsall Borough, made the  
 twentye-fourth of November, of what he hath disburst  
 for the Towne from October, 1661, untill October,  
 1662." The following are among the most interesting  
 items:

	£	s.	d.
ffor sending of a hue and cry to Rushall ...	00	00	03
gave to a man and his wife and six children, that came with a passe ...	00	01	06
hire of a horse six days to Stafford, when I went in with the souldiers ...	00	06	00
paid to the souldiers for there pay for eight dayes	02	08	00
ffor getting the cuck stoole out of y <sup>e</sup> towne brooke	00	00	06

GENERAL HISTORY.		£ s. d.		
		00	01	02
1662.	ffor removeing the stockes out of the crosse ...	00	01	02
...	paid to 45 clubmen yt walked ye fair ...	00	07	03
	paid to ye high constable for maimed souldiers	00	10	00
	paid for a pound and a halfe of gunpowder, that was shot away upon ye kinge's hely day ...	00	02	00
	paid to a messenger to fetch ye coronour to sit upon mason's child, &c. ...	00	01	04
	ffor a horse too dayes more, when I went to give in a presentment at Stafford, of those that had been actually in arms against his majesty	00	02	00

"By order of  
the King,"  
p. 30.

The object of the cucking stool or tumbrel here mentioned was to duck scolding women. Victor Hugo gives the derivation from the French "coquire," and the German "stuhl;" "English law being endowed with a strange longevity, this punishment still exists in English legislation for quarrelsome women. The cucking stool is suspended over a river or pond, the woman seated over it. The chair is allowed to drop into the water, and then pulled out. This dipping of the woman is repeated three times, 'to cool her anger,' says the commentator Chamberlayn." A ducking stool is still preserved at Leominster, and was used as lately as 1817.

Plot, p. 380.

In addition to the cucking stool, Walsall possessed another judicial implement, "the branks," or "scold's bridle," the original of which is probably one of those to be seen in the Museum at Lichfield, given to it by a gentleman of this town. Another is preserved at Hamstall Ridware. Dr. Plot writes, "They have a peculiar artifice at Newcastle and Walsall for correcting of Scolds, which it does, too, so effectually and so very safely, that I look upon it as much to be preferred to the cucking stool, which not only endangers the health of the party, but also gives the tongue liberty, 'twixt every dip,' to neither of which this is at all lyable, it being such a bridle for the tongue, as not only quite deprives them of speech, but brings shame for the transgression and humility thereupon before it is taken off." This instrument "being put upon the offender by order of the Magistrate, and fastened by a padlock behind,

she is led round the town by an officer, to her shame, nor is it taken off till after the party begins to show all external signs imaginable of humiliation and amendment." Plot gives a plate of one of these bridles, which is made of narrow thin plates of iron, with vacancies for the nose and eyes. When fixed on the offender, a flat piece of iron projects into the mouth, and presses on the tongue. A ring in the centre carries a cord, which was used to lead the offender about.

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The expenses of the poor at this time are still preserved in the old parish book of St. Matthew's. The following table is given by Pearce:

Pearce

Mr. Thomas Roper and Mr. Samuel Pearson, Overseers, 1686.

	£	s.	d.
Paid by Mr. Roper, 25 weeks ... ..	41	16	5
Paid by Mr. Pearson, 25 weeks...	41	6	9
Paid for by charges, Mr. Roper .. ..	6	18	9
Paid for by charges, Mr. Pearson ... ..	7	10	8
	<hr/>		
	£97	12	7
Total levys... ..	95	12	2
Received of Mr. Turnpenny ... ..	4	0	0
" Mr. Warren and Benj. Gorton .. ..	1	13	8
	<hr/>		
	£101	5	10
Not received in the levys ... ..	7	2	
In other charges ... ..	6	1	
Paid John Ball and Simon Bibb, which balances the account ... ..	3	0	0

In the list of persons disclaimed at the public assizes held at Stafford, in August 1664, are the following local names:

Salt C  
pt. 1

WALSALL BOROUGH ... ..	HENRY STONE.
" " ... ..	THOMAS SHEPHEARD.
" " ... ..	WILLIAM SMITH.
" " ... ..	GEORGE HILL.
" " ... ..	THOMAS BALL.
WALSALL FOREIGN ... ..	JOHN HAWKES, of Shelfield.
RUSHALL AND GOSCOTE ... ..	THOMAS BIRCH.
" " ... ..	THOMAS WOORSEY.
" " ... ..	GREGORY WOODWARD.
GREAT BLOXWICH ... ..	NICHOLAS PARKER.

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1664.

Plot, p. 301.

Plot has preserved the following curious case, which gives an illustration of medical opinion as it existed in those days: "It may also be reckoned amongst the uncommon distempers that one George Holden, a butcher of Walsall, was long sick of a periodical Asthma, which constantly came upon him once in 14 or 20 days at most; of which at last dyeing and his body being open'd, yet all his Viscera (the lungs especially) were found well and sound, there being no signes left either of Phlegme or viscous humour that had ever affected them, or of any stagnation of the blood in the veins; nor was there anything met with unusual in him (as the learned Dr. Needham informed Dr. Willis), but that many stones were found in his gall bladder. Not that these learned men did think the dyspnœa or disease of the person was to be ascribed to these stones, but to a convulsion of Nerves about the Lungs, or amongst the muscles subservient to breathing, which possibly might arise either from severe vellications in the Intestines by sharp humors, ill separation of the nervous juice in the brain, or obstruction of them in the nerves themselves, either of which might cause such a convulsive cough without any affection of the lungs at all."

About this time a good many local tokens were issued, of which the following are specimens:

Boyerne,  
"English  
Tokens,"  
p. 408.

O. CHRISTOPHER DICKEN: C.E.D. ... } ½d.  
R. Mercer in Walsall: C.E.D. ... }

Christopher Dicken belonged to the family of Dicken, of Walton, and was the first to settle in Walsall. His brother William, was Rector of Darlaston in 1663.

O. Walsall, 1656: I.F. ... } ½d.  
R. And Wedgbury: I.F. ... }

O. HENRY HODGKINSON: A hart lodged. H.A.H. } ½d.  
R. Of Walsall, 1664: His halfepenny ... }

O. JOAN LANDER: A hart ... } ½d.  
R. In Walsall, 1656: I.S.L. ... }

The family of Lander, or Lavender, is a very old one in the town, and in the early registers the name is constantly met with.

O. ELIZABETH WEBB: The Mercers' Arms ... } ½d.  
R. Mercer in Walsall: E.W. ... }

Jackson, "Hist.  
of Lichfield,"  
p. 17.

On August 31st, 1687, James II. visited Lichfield,

and one of the constables who attended his Majesty to the City was Mr. Mousley, of Walsall.

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1654.

Before passing further we may notice that Walsall in the 17th century had become a comparatively large and important town, its population at this period being estimated by Plot at 5,500, while that of Birmingham numbered in 1700, 15,032. If this estimate be correct, the town would thus rank in point of size, population and commercial importance as second in the county, while its prominent position in the surrounding landscape, its antiquity as a borough, its proximity to the main thoroughfare between Chester and London, and the wide reputation already attained by its saddlers and ironmongers, together contributed to elevate it so much above its more portly neighbour Birmingham, as to give rise to the expression "Birmingham, near Walsall," although at that time the population of the former was certainly treble that of the latter. A variety of the same phrase occasionally met with, is "Birmingham, a small village near Wednesbury," here again denoting the influence of situation, antiquity, and commercial importance.

Handbook of  
Birmingham,  
p. 35.

Hawk's Smith,  
p. 14.

As before stated, the population of the Borough and Foreign at this period was estimated by Plot to be about 5,500. The basis of this calculation was afforded by the Moseley Dole, which amounted at that time to about £23; but if as stated by Mr. W. C. Owen, the distributors of the Dole retained a penny at every house on behalf of the "Court Leet," the number would be halved, and in all probability much nearer the truth. A calculation based on the number of "Hearths," and also on the number of births at that time, tends broadly to the same conclusion. The estimates of those days are, however, so entirely contradictory and unsatisfactory, that nothing of certainty can be deduced from them.

Walsall Red  
Book, 1882,  
p. 89.

With regard to the manufactures and trades of the town at this time, Plot writing about 1686, says: "Nor are they less curious in their Ironworks at

Plot, p. 370.

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1696.

the Town of Walsall, which chiefly relate to somewhat of Horsemanship, such as Spurs, Bridles, Stirrups," &c. From his long and minute account, we find that the natives were then skilled in the making of every article connected with saddlery and of all kinds of buckles. Birmingham, Bewdley, and Tamworth were also great seats of the saddlery trade, but more especially of the tanning of leather.

Hist. of Bewd-  
ley, p. 13.

We also learn that Walsall men were familiar with the arts of tinning metals, and the casting of iron, copper, and brass pots (commodities). "Owing to the rapid developement of Birmingham and the large influx of skilled labourers, many of the smiths and lorimers (lorymore, a bridle bit maker), retreated to Walsall, Wednesbury, and Willenhall."

Hawk's Smith.

Plot, p. 150.

Ironstone was raised at this time both at Walsall and at Rushall, opposite the church, and was divided into six different varieties. (1) Black Bothum, (2) Gray Bothum, (3) Chatterpye, being the colour of a magpie; (4) Gray measure, (5) Mush, (6) White measure. "The two first," says Plot, "are seldom made use of, they are so very mean; the two middle sorts but indifferent; the two last, the principal sorts, but Mush the best of all, a small comby-stone, othersome round and hollow, and many times fill'd with a briske sweet liquor, which the Workmen drink greedily, so very rich an ore that they say it may be made into Iron in a common Forge. I think that the sweet liquor that attends some of the Iron Ore, deserves a little furthur consideration, whereof I received a most accurat account from the Worshipful Henry Leigh, of Rushall, Esq., in whose lands, particularly in the Mill-meddow, near the furnace in the Park; in the Moss Close, near the old Vicaridg house; and in the furnace piece or Lesow it is frequently met with amongst the best sort of Ironstone call'd Mush, in round or oval, blackish and redish stones, sometimes as big as the crown of ones hat, hollow and like a honeycomb within, and holding a pint of this matter, of a sweet sharp taste, very cold

and cuting, yet greedily drank by the Workmen.” After many enquiries from old miners in the district, I have been unable to find out anything definite respecting this liquor. The ironstone is now practically extinct, but traces of its former existence are still to be found. Ge:  
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Plot further states that the ore from Rushall and Walsall—which latter, however, was not quite so good—was used for making tough iron, out of which the best wares were made. Limestone was dug “all about Walsall, particularly in the lands of the learned Henry Leigh, Esq., where it lyes in beds for the most part horizontally.” According to Plot the lime-burners here were much more adroit than those of other neighbourhoods. Plot, p

Large numbers of the inhabitants were doubtless employed at this time in agriculture and in the great woods, which still spread around the town. The centre of the town itself was still the parish church, and the main increase of building was in this locality. Old timber houses stretched now through Digbeth to the Lord’s Mill, and the Bridge was in times of flood a complete lake. A few houses alone stood scattered along the “Parke Streete” and the Town End, while beyond were narrow green lanes, gardens and fields. The public buildings were few, consisting only of the church, the grammar school adjacent, the market house and municipal offices in the “Highe Crosse.” The only dissenting place of worship was the Old Meeting House in Bank or Fox’s Court, High Street, at the back of Mr. Overton’s, then occupied by Mr. Fox, a grocer.

For a hundred years the old Meeting House, built in 1662, stood without opposition, but in 1763 the congregation became divided into two factions, one of which founded a new Independent Chapel in Dudley Street.

The history of the early Nonconformists in Walsall dates back to about 1660, and took its rise with the Rev. Mr. Byrdall. Upon somewhat slender



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1714.  
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authority it has been stated that it existed to a small extent in the reign of Elizabeth, taking its origin from the Presbyterian movement, of which Sir Edward Leigh, of Rushall, was a strong supporter, besides being a member of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. Until 1688 the meetings must have been conducted in private. Meeting houses were erected in courts, and had usually high pews, to prevent seeing who was there, while ministers sometimes preached from behind a curtain, and with trap doors near, for escape. Singing was but seldom used.

It now remains to trace the domestic history of Walsall through its rapid growth during the 18th, and its still more rapid development in the 19th century.

Life of  
Reynolds,  
p. 13.

Pict. History.

The first incident of note took place in 1714, when numerous religious feuds occurred in various parts of the country, and the bitter hostility existing at that time between the Church and the Dissenters, exposed the latter to much insult and violence, and many attacks were made upon the Dissenting Meeting Houses. "For many years," says a writer, "had the Dissenters lain under the most tyrannical oppression; their ministers were either altogether hinder'd from preaching the gospel, or forc'd to do it in Holes and corners, at unfit times and in inconvenient places, and then with a great deal of danger." "In Staffordshire, one of the least civilized and most tory counties, these excesses were greatest, and scarcely a Whig or Dissenter there could escape insult or more serious injury." At Wolverhampton, Birmingham, Oldbury, and Dudley, a similar destruction of chapels took place. At West Bromwich two men were shot by Cornet Lowe, whilst in the act of unroofing the chapel there. In Walsall, the old Meeting House, in Bank Court, already described, was attacked by a furious mob. The minister, the Rev. John Godley, of the University of Leyden, was a scholar of some note, and much respected by the townspeople. It is

said that "he was a man of great zeal and charity, void of all pride, a diligent servant in the gospel, and blessed with remarkable success, and was universally missed when dead." He appears to have made every attempt to appease the fury of the rioters, but in vain, the excitement increased, he was hurried by his friends from the scene, and in a short time the building was thoroughly destroyed. It was afterwards rebuilt, in 1715, at the expense of the Government, but in 1751 was again destroyed by rioters—"a church and king mob."

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1715.  
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The old Presbyterian faith merged gradually into that of modern Unitarianism, and in 1827 Christ's Chapel, in Stafford Street, was built, which is now the sole representative of early Walsall dissent. The pulpit at this chapel is said to be the same, or partly the same, that was used in the old Meeting House in Bank Court. In connection with this place of worship is "Fowler's Sunday School Charity," bequeathed by George Fowler in 1699, for "the teaching and instructing of poor children of the town of Walsall."

Walsall  
Observer,  
Feb., 1879.

Glew, p. 132.

A somewhat scarce little book gives us some particulars of the life of the Rev. John Reynolds, in many ways a remarkable man, and an intimate friend and helper of the Rev. Mr. Godley. He was the son of a Mr. John Reynolds, a public minister at Wolverhampton, who was ejected by the "Act of Uniformity" in 1662, but evidently not silenced, for in a letter from Sir Bryan Boughton in 1663, it states that "Reynolds has been preaching at a conventicle, as he always does when plots are in agitation." The son, after ministering in various places, finally decided in 1721 to give up his charge in Bednall Green, London, and go into the country, freely to serve some minister that stood in need of help. "It pleased Providence to direct his way to Walsall in Staffordshire, where the Rev. Mr. Godley was Pastor to a congregation of Dissenters. There he continued to the time of his death, preaching usually in the morning every Lord's

State Papers.

Life of Rey-  
nolds, p. 155.

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Life of Rey-  
nolds, p. 175.

Day, and thereby greatly assisting that truly valuable man, and serving I verily believe to prolong his Life, for after Mr. Reynolds was dead and he was destitute of his help, Disorders grew upon him and in about two years put an End to his useful Life." Many of Reynold's "Meditations" are dated from Walsall, and are marked by devout and serious piety. He was a great friend of the Rev. Matthew Henry, and was the author of several religious works, namely, "The Religion of Jesus delineated," a Poem upon "Death," and a "Discourse of Reconciliation," a book recommended by both Dr. Watts and Mr. Matthew Henry. In 1727 he was preaching at West Bromwich, when he was taken ill in the pulpit, and was taken home to Walsall, where he died a few days afterwards. His biographer, after a long panegyric upon his piety, veneration, zeal, and the various qualifications of his character, says, "I believe Walsall was as suitable a place to this his Temper, as any he lived in. There he lived in a great measure unnoticed and unknown. There he undisturbedly pursued his beloved Work and Studies; there he had in Mr. Godley a true, a sincere, ingenious and good humoured friend. There did he maintain very close and intimate converse and communion with Heaven; did loosen by degrees from this World and grow up in Meetness for the Employments and Enjoyments of the blessed above and took his Flight at last to them in as private a manner as he had lived," &c. He was buried at West Bromwich Old Church, and Mrs. Sarah Savage says, in her Diary of March, 1738, "Looking out of my window I see Bromwich Church, where that excellent man Mr. Reynolds was buried. I have desired that my bones may be laid by his especially that I may stand with him at Christ's right hand in that day."

A book published by a Walsall author, Richard Hammersley, is worth notice. It is entitled "A help against sin in our ordinary discourse, as also against prophane cursing, swearing, evil wishing, and taking God's name in vain, and also against Trimming (Shaving)

on the Lord's Day, shewing that it is neither a work of mercy nor case of necessity, and therefore ought not to be done on that day. Published by the author, R. H., Chyrurgeon in Walsall, Staffordshire, 1719." The book is curious as being one of the earliest printed in Birmingham. Richard Hammersley, who was an ancestor of the family of Hobbins, was also the author of another book printed in 1706, "Advice to Sunday Barbers against Trimming on the Lord's Day," &c.

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1721.  
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In 1721 Mr. Thomas Fletcher gave up the "Dragon" in High Street, which at that time shared with the "Bull's Head" in Upper Rushall Street the distinction of being the best inn in the town, and built the "George Hotel," which originally opened into Digbeth. In 1823 the front of the hotel was re-modelled, the large pillars being bought for about the cost of their carriage from Fisherwick Hall, which had been pulled down. The late Earl of Derby was a great patron of the house on his way between Knowsley and London, and also Lord Hatherton, who presided at the Colonnade dinner in August, 1823.

The year 1727 was notable for the erection of the first Workhouse. Up to this date the accommodation of two or three small houses occupying a site near the top of Hill Street, near the churchyard, had proved sufficient for the poor of the town, and an inscription recorded "that these houses were bought of Mr. Thomas Harris, of Worcester, by the Corporation, for the use of the poor of Walsall; the Mayor paying yearly to the organist £4 per an. In the Mayoralty of Richard Burrowes, A.D. 1717." Another account states that the houses were originally left to the Corporation and called "Harris' gift," and that they were chargeable with a payment of £4 a year to the organist. As the town increased they were added to and enlarged, but very soon became quite inadequate. Glew, p. 180.

In 1722 pauperism had so greatly increased that an Act of Parliament was passed granting additional

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1721.

powers, and authorising parishes to provide separate buildings for the maintenance of the poor. The following minute in the vestry book shews that the authorities were not long before they availed themselves of the powers of the Act :

" It is agreed upon by a Vestry, this 11th day of June, 1727, appointed and held in the parish church of Walsall, that a workhouse shall be built. As witness our hands.

(Signed). " J. ETHERIDGE, Mayor.  
" JOHN MOSS, Vicar."  
And many others.

The new building was erected by the Corporation in 1732, and in 1761 Simon Cox was chosen as first governor. Dissensions seem, however, to have arisen between the civic authorities and the townsfolk, and a few years later an "Ejectment" was brought "by the Mayor and Commonalty of the Borough of Walsall for the recovery of the workhouse from the inhabitants of the said borough, and to consider of other matters and grievances relative to the inhabitants and poor of the said borough." A public vestry meeting was held on 12th June, 1769, when the churchwardens were empowered to take legal proceedings in order to protect their rights in the workhouse and its affairs. The final result of this suit does not appear to be recorded, but it may be inferred that it went against the Corporation. In 1781 Richard Lambert was appointed governor, at a salary of £25, under the following restrictions, which are curious enough to be quoted in full :

Vestry Book.

" That the said Richard Lambert keep good order and rule in the said house ; that he and the whole family go to rest and rise at necessary and reasonable hours ; that the said house and premises at all times be kept clean, sweet and decent ; also to cause the seats and pews in the said parish church to be swept and cleaned every Saturday by the poor in the said house, without any expense to the inhabitants ; also that the said governor of the said house not to have any private or weekly bill for the use of the said house or poor, &c. ; likewise that he keep the poor in the said house to work (such as are not capable to go to out-work) in such employment as he shall think necessary and most convenient. And those out-workers, such as mechanics, labourers, &c., the said master to agree with all masters or mistresses for such servants

by the day, the week, or piece, and he to keep a memorandum book for that purpose, by which means it may be made known to the acting overseer for the time being what is due from each master to each servant, and the said governor to collect such money weekly and transmit the same to the overseer of the poor; also the said governor to go all journeys on parish business or such as are thought advisable by the overseer or his colleague; the said governor to pay the poor, occasionally to assist the overseer in buying of meat, clothing, or other reasonable business; the said governor to be allowed all reasonable charges upon journeys. It is further agreed the said governor shall not be allowed any other perquisites, more than his yearly wages of £25 "

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The new workhouse occupied the same site as the old one, and was further enlarged in 1799. According to Pearce, it contained "a dining room 42 feet long and 15 feet wide, with two lodging rooms over it of the same dimensions, very pleasant and airy; also a large room in which the poor are employed in spinning woollen and linen for their own wear. It is very inconveniently situated, on account of the difficulty of conveyance to it, and all the soft water is carried by hand, by poor persons in the house, for the purposes of washing, &c., for a numerous family. Two hundred and ten poor persons have been lodged in this house in the year 1801." The gable end of the old building is still standing, and may be easily identified from the churchyard. There was also a workhouse at Bloxwich capable of containing about 100 persons.

In 1838 the present large building on the Pleck Road was erected, at a cost of £7,600, and this has since been greatly enlarged to meet the increasing wants of the poorer classes.

The following tables, from the Parish books, are examples of the amounts expended upon the poor:

	£	s.	d.
In 1686 the total amount was ... ..	97	12	7
In 1742 this had increased to ... ..	338	17	2½
And in the year 1810 amounted to close upon	2,000	0	0
In 1854 the total expenditure was ... ..	5,913	3	0
For the year 1886-7 it amounted to about ...	14,704	0	0

The following is a copy of "An entrey of all the

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1726.

provision for the workhouse from the 12th to the 19th of April exclusive, 1733 ” :

	£	s.	d.
1 side of pork, wt. 39lb. .. .. .	7	5	
1 leg of veal, wt. 9lb. .... .	1	3	
28lb. of rice .... .	5	4	
6lb. of sugar, at 3½d. .... .	1	9	
7 doz. of household bread .. .	7	0	
5 cheeses .... .	9	3	
2lb. of butter .... .		8½	
2 pecks and quarter of wheat flower .. .	1	6	
Salt, 1 peck and 1lb. .... .	1	0	
Oatmeal, 1 peck and 3 quarters.. .	1	3	
3lb. of candles .... .	1	3	
1 strike of malt .... .	3	2	
For hops and barm and for brewing .. .	1	1	
Milk .... .	2	4	
Total .. .	<u>£2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3½</u>

We glean also from the Parish Book the prices of provisions in 1812 :

	£	s.	d.
Malt per bushel .... .	14	0	
Wheat do. .... .	1	3	0
Oatmeal do. .... .	13	0	
Beef, mutton, and veal, per lb. .. .		8	
Coals per ton .... .	12	6	

In 1726, a commission for charitable uses was issued out of chancery for the county of Stafford, and a complaint was entered against the corporation of Walsall on account of the mismanagement of the charitable bequests belonging to the borough and foreign. These benefactions were very numerous, many of them having arisen during the latter half of the 17th century, at that period when it became the benevolent fashion to establish alms houses and charitable schools for the poor. These charities had been from time to time the cause of much litigation and discontent. So early as 1614 an enquiry was held regarding the manner in which the trusts were carried out. Another was held in 1682, and others in 1726, 1804, 1823, and 1855. A full account of this latter enquiry and of the charities themselves is given

in Glew's History, and forms by far the most valuable portion of that work. The results of these various investigations brought to light many discreditable and unaccountable facts. It was found that many of the charities were irrecoverably lost, that large sums of money had found their way into the pockets of private individuals and trustees, that several had been effectually stamped out by costly legal proceedings, and that in scarcely an instance had the original intention of the donor been carried out. In one case, that of Parker's charity, the law expenses amounted to £1,229 16s. 5d. In another, the Fishley charity, the sum of £460 was received from the sale of mines, under a part of the estate, while the law costs connected with the sale came to £459 5s. 6d., thus leaving a balance of 14s. 6d. for the good of the charity. In yet another instance, the proceeds of the trust during six years amounted to £256 4s. 6d., of which only £50 8s. 11d. was distributed; the remainder of the accumulated income was totally lost through the insolvency of the receiver.

G.  
H

Glew.

Ibid.

In the seventh report of the Charity Commissioners for 1859, the following amounts of stocks are mentioned as belonging to the Charitable Trusts of Walsall :

			£	s.	d.
Free Grammar School	...	...	800	0	0
Bentley Hay Charity	...	...	470	13	6
John Hawles Charity	...	...	867	7	8

A Parliamentary return was issued a few years back, giving the statistics of the charitable bequests of Staffordshire. From this we gather that Walsall is one of the wealthiest towns in the county in this respect. The charities including the borough and foreign amount to £1,600 7s. 10d., of which sum £1,067 8s. 10d. goes for educational purposes; £113 13s. 4d. for apprenticing; £72 9s. 4d. for church purposes; £40 18s. 2d. for alms houses, and the remainder in Doles. The total amount is only exceeded by Lichfield, Burton, Newcastle, and Wolverhampton.



GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1743.  
—

Much light is thrown upon the history of this time by the Journal of John Wesley. The doctrines of Methodism began early to take root in this neighbourhood, and Wednesbury was the mother society of the sect in Staffordshire, Wesley himself recording no less than thirty-four visits to this one of his favourite missions. The new system excited much bigotry and intolerance of feeling amongst the masses of the people, while the followers of the new sect underwent a cruel and merciless persecution. For several months mob law prevailed in and about Walsall. People bound themselves by oaths to plunder all Methodists. The houses of the latter were broken open, their goods taken and destroyed, they were beaten and wounded, and their women shamefully illtreated. Wesley, to whom a full account had been sent, says, "I received a full account of the terrible riots which had been in Staffordshire. I was not surprised at all, neither should I have wondered if, after the advices they had so often received from the pulpit, as well as from the episcopal chair, the zealous high Churchmen had rose and cut all that were Methodists in pieces."

Journal, v. 1.  
p. 307.

Ibid., p. 429.

From June, 1743, to the following February, we are told that "the mob of Walsal, Darlaston, and Wednesbury, hired for that purpose by their betters, have broke open their poor neighbours' houses at their pleasure, by night and by day; extorted money from the few that had it, took away or destroyed their victuals and goods; beat or wounded their bodies; threatened their lives; abused their women (some in a manner too horrible to name), and openly declared they would destroy every Methodist in the country." In June of this year the riots became so serious that Wesley himself hastened down to assist the sufferers, and if possible quell the disturbances. On October 20th he preached to a large and apparently peaceable congregation at Wednesbury, and retired afterwards to the house of a Mr. Francis Ward. "Here I was writing," he says, "in the

afternoon, when the cry arose that the mob had beset the house." After some altercation they decided to take Wesley that evening before a Justice. "The night came on before we had walked a mile, together with heavy rain. However, on we went to Bentley Hall, two miles from Wednesbury." One or two ran before to tell Mr. Lane they had brought Mr. Wesley before his worship. Mr. Lane replied, "What have I to do with Mr. Wesley? Go and carry him back again." By this time the main body came up and began knocking at the door. A servant told them Mr. Lane was in bed. His son followed and asked what was the matter. One replied, "Why, an't please you, they sing psalms all day, nay, and make folks rise at five in the morning. And what would your worship advise us to do?" "To go home," said Mr. Lane, "and be quiet." "Here they were at a full stop, till one advised to go to Justice Persehouse, at Walsal. All agreed to this, so we hastened on, and about seven, came to his house. But Mr. Persehouse likewise sent word that he was in bed. Now they were at a stand again, but at last they all thought it the wisest course to make the best of their way home. About fifty of them undertook to convey me. But we had not gone a hundred yards when the mob of Walsal came pouring in like a flood, and bore down all before them. The Darlaston mob made what defence they could, but they were weary as well as outnumbered, so that in a short time, many being knocked down, the rest ran away and left me in their hands. To attempt speaking was in vain, for the noise on every side was like the roaring of the sea. So they dragged me along till we came to the town, where, seeing the door of a large house open, I attempted to go in, but a man, catching me by the hair, pulled me back into the middle of the mob. They made no more stop till they had carried me through the main street from one end of the town to the other. I continued speaking all the time to those within

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1743.  
—

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1743.  
—

hearing, feeling no pain or weariness. At the west end of the town, seeing a door half open, I made toward it, and would have gone in, but a gentleman in the shop would not suffer me, saying they would pull the house down to the ground. However, I stood at the door and asked, 'Are you willing to hear me speak?' Many cried out, 'No, no! knock his brains out; down with him; kill him at once.' Others said, 'Nay, but we will hear him first.' I began asking, 'What evil have I done? Which of you all have I wronged in word or deed?' And continued speaking for above a quarter of an hour, till my voice suddenly failed; then the floods began to lift up their voice again, many crying out, 'Bring him away, bring him away.' In the meantime my strength and my voice returned, and I broke out aloud with prayer. And now the man who just before headed the mob turned and said, 'Sir, I will spend my life for you, follow me, and not one soul here shall touch a hair of your head.' Two or three of his fellows confirmed his words, and got close to me immediately. At the same time the gentleman in the shop cried out, 'For shame, for shame, let him go.' An honest butcher, who was a little farther off, said it was a shame they should do this, and pulled back four or five, one after another, who were running on the most fiercely. The people then, as if it had been by common consent, fell back to the right and left, while those three or four men took me between them, and carried me through them all. But on the bridge the mob rallied again, we therefore went on one side, over the mill dam, and thence through the meadows, till, a little before ten, God brought me safe to Wednesbury, having lost only one flap of my waistcoat, and a little skin from one of my hands." Such is Wesley's own account of his treatment at the hands of the Walsall mob, and he gives many other particulars of the dangers and ill-usage he underwent before he got finally clear of the town. He concludes by saying, "I cannot

close this head without inserting as great a curiosity of its kind as I believe was ever seen in England, which had its birth within a very few days of this remarkable occurrence at Walsal"—

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1743-1744.  
—

“Staffordshire.

“TO ALL HIGH CONSTABLES, PETTY CONSTABLES, AND OTHER OF HIS MAJESTY’S  
PEACE OFFICERS WITHIN THE SAID COUNTY AND PARTICULARLY TO THE  
CONSTABLE OF TIPTON (NEAR WALSALE).

“Whereas we, His Majesty’s Justices of the Peace for the said County of Stafford, have received information that several disorderly persons styling themselves Methodist Preachers go about raising routs and riots to the great damage of His Majesty’s liege people and against the peace of our Sovereign Lord the King; These are in His Majesty’s name to command you and every one of you, within your respective districts, to make diligent search after the said Methodist Preachers, and to bring him or them before some of us His said Majesty’s Justices of the Peace to be examined concerning their unlawful doings. Given under our hands and seals this      day of Oct., 1743.

“J. LANE.

“W. PERSEHOUSE.”

(N.B.—The very Justices to whose houses I was carried, and who severally refused to see me.)

The following day he left for Nottingham, where he met his brother Charles, who remarks, “He looked like a hero from the battle field.” In another place he says, “My brother came delivered out of the mouth of the lions. His clothes were torn to tatters. He looked just like a soldier of Christ. The mob of Walsall, Darlaston, and Wednesbury, were permitted to take and carry him about for several hours with a full intent to murder him; but his work is not yet finished, or he had been now with the souls under the altar.” In commemoration of this event, Charles Wesley wrote one of his most beautiful hymns, beginning “Worship and thanks and blessing.” In spite of the illtreatment of his brother, Charles on leaving Nottingham went straight to Wednesbury, where he was suffered to preach without interruption.

Diary of Charles  
Wesley.

The following extract redounds somewhat more to the credit of our town. “On Wednesday, February 8th, 1744, the mob from Wednesbury divided into two or three companies, one of which went to Aldridge

Journal, v. i,  
p. 426.

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1744-1764.

four miles from Wednesbury, and plundered many houses there as they had done in several other villages. Here also they loaded themselves with clothes and goods of all sorts, as much as they could stand under. They came back through Walsal with their spoils, but the gentlemen of Walsal being apprized of their coming raised a body of men, who met them, took what they had away, and laid it up in the Town Hall. Notice was sent to Aldridge that every man who had been plundered, might come and take his own goods." In reference to these disturbances he says in another place, "Many hundreds of the mob did assemble themselves in a riotous manner, having given public notice several days before (particularly by a paper set up in Walsal market place), that on Shrove Tuesday they intended to come and destroy the Methodists, and inviting all the country to come and join them."

Journal, v. i.,  
p. 127.

In July, 1745, Wesley was at Falmouth, where the mob again attacked and illused him, and on this he remarks: "I never saw before, no, not at Walsal itself, the hand of God so plainly shewn as here. There I had many companions who were willing to die with me; here not a friend but one simple girl, who likewise was hurried away from me in an instant. There I received some blows, lost part of my clothes and was covered with dirt; here, although the hands of perhaps some hundreds of people were lifted up to strike or throw, yet they were one and all stopped in the midway, so that not a man touched me with one of his fingers." Twenty years afterwards he was again at Wednesbury, preaching to large and attentive congregations. On March 26th, 1764, he writes: "I was desired to preach at Walsal. James Jones was alarmed at the notion, apprehending there would be much disturbance. However, I determined to make the trial. Coming into the house I met with a token for good. A woman was telling her neighbour why she came. 'I had a desire,' said she, 'to hear this man, yet I durst not because I heard so much ill of him; but this morning I dreamed I was praying

Ibid, p. 147.

Ibid, v. iii.,  
p. 155.

earnestly, and I heard a voice saying, "See the eighth verse of the first chapter of St. John." I waked and got my Bible and read, "He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light." I got up and came away with all my heart.' " Coming to Walsall he says: "The house not being capable of containing the people, about seven I began preaching abroad, and there was no opposer, no, nor a trifler to be seen. All present were earnestly attentive. How is Walsall changed! How has God either tamed the wild beasts or chained them up." The building here alluded to was an upper room over the Castle Inn, in Castle Yard, George Street, rented by the Methodists. Afterwards they migrated to a larger one, over the stables at the Dragon Inn.

G  
H

In 1801 the famous Bedlam Chapel was built in Paradise Court, High Street, which afforded accommodation for 400 persons. It acquired the name of Bedlam from the violent character of the people who lived there and long anterior to the chapel being built. The Methodists attempted in vain to change the name to Paradise Court. For a long time they were greatly annoyed by the people, and one man, according to Mr. Brewer, was kept in prison fourteen days on the charge of "playing the Methodys." The old Wesleyan Chapel in Ablewell Street was built in 1829, the present one in 1859, and the Centenary Chapel in Stafford Street in 1839. In 1877 Trinity Chapel was opened in Corporation Street, at an outlay of upwards of £7,000.

Wals  
Ob  
Jun

Such is the history of Walsall Methodism, and we must conclude by a final reference to the journal of Wesley for March, 1770, where he gives a long account of two remarkable children named Cooper, "at Walsall in Staffordshire, who were convinced of sin, and died shortly afterwards in a state of spiritual extacy."

Jour  
p.

For the next fifty years after the visit of John Wesley the current of Walsall life flowed more quietly along, while the town itself rapidly developed in size and importance, as may be instanced by the rental of the manor, which in 1744 was estimated at £500, and

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1714-1744.

had by the close of the century increased to nearly £1,500.

In the meantime the parish account book supplies us with several items of interest. The first constable's account is dated 1681, and in February 17th, 1715, another memorandum states "that there was delivered by Mr. Richard Burrowes to the present constable as followeth—Three coats, three neckcloths, and three hats; two new muskets and an old one with two bayonets; one new sword and two old ones; three belts and three new cartridge boxes."

On November 15th, 1731, it was agreed "that the churchwardens shall pay for the erecting of an altar peece in the parish church of Walsall the sum of twenty-one pounds."

"June 4th, 1749. Agreed that the sum of ten pounds shall be paid to Mr. Daniel Hartshorne for the expences he hath been at on the account of employing a surgeon for setting Rich. Burges' thigh, which was broke in Nottinghamshire, he being a parishioner here." Entries of payments for sparrows' heads and hedgehogs are not unfrequent, and in 1771 the bellman was to receive annually the sum of one guinea as "dog-whipper."

Of Briefs, as they were called, only two specimens are preserved: "January 20th, 1732. Then collected upon a Brief received the 14th July last for the use of the sufferers by the late fire which happened at Ramsey, in the county of Huntingdon, 17 shillings and a  $\frac{1}{2}$ d." "Money collected for Wolverton on account of a fier as happened at the new church in the year 1788, Thirty nine pounds ten shillings. The above collected money was for Wolverhampton, in the county of Stafford."

Record Office.

The Rolls of Parliament from 1714 to 1744 contain various petitions from Walsall. One points out that the roadways are "ruinous and dangerous;" another is "for making and maintaining a navigable canal;" whilst others relate to the metal and buckle trades and the "increase of land carriages."

The *London Gazette* for March, 1728, says :  
 "Whereas John Wilson, of Walsall, in Co. Stafford, chapman, did about twelve months ago travel into Yorkshire, and hath never since been heard of by any of his friends in Walsall aforesaid, this is to give notice that whoever will inform Mary Wilson, of Walsall (the said John Wilson's mother), whether the said John Wilson be living or dead, shall receive one guinea reward." A further entry reveals that he was adjudicated a bankrupt.

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1728-1750.

About the year 1750 the condition of St. Matthew's churchyard, which had become crowded and insufficient for the growing needs of the town, gave rise to much complaint, and the Corporation purchased what is now known as the Old Burial Ground in Bath Street, which was walled in and consecrated. The exact date of this occurrence has been disputed, but is now solved by the following entry in the church register :

"Be it remembered that the first brick in the new burial ground in Windmill Field was laid there upon Monday, the sixteenth day of March, 1751. Mr. A. Bealey laid the first brick ; Mrs. Elizabeth Cox the second brick ; the Rev. Robert Felton, Clerk and Vicar, a corner brick upon these two. Present, Mr. Richard Neville, Town Clerk of Walsall ; Mr. Matthew Beale, mercer ; Mr. John Edensor, surgeon apothecary ; and others."

Register No. 2.  
Fly leaf.

### The earliest tombstone bears the inscription :

"William Burn, departed this life August ye 8th, 175 , aged 56, he being the first that was buried here."

Glew relates that a dispute once arose between two townsmen with reference to this date. A wager was made, but one of the parties, unperceived, managed to add a tail to the 0, and the question thus remained unsolved.

Glew, p. 36.

The following statement was made by Captain Hamilton, of Sir Jno. Mordaunt's Regiment of Dragoons, at Walsall, upon Saturday, the 2nd day of June, 1750, in regard to the conduct and behaviour of some of the inhabitants of the aforesaid place, Walsall, in the county of Stafford, upon Tuesday,

Marlow MS.



GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1750.

the 29th day of May preceding, being the Restoration of King Charles the Second, viz. :

"That upon the sd. twenty-ninth day of May, and about twelve o'clock at noon, a crowd of people assembled, to the number of near three hundred, in a riotous and tumultuous manner upon a certain place or street in the said town of Walsall, called The Hill, and then and there had a image or figure dressed up in the likeness of a man, his head was a barber's block, with an old wig upon it, and there was fixed to the hinder part of it a horse tail which reached down all along the back; that he had upon his hands white gloves and upon his legs white stockings; that his cloathing appeared to be chiefly rags, or anything else that could make it look mean and disgracefull; that about the neck was a thick rope twisted round three or four times, and upon the breast was a paper or label, with these words wrote upon it: 'This is King Geo: the Second,' and a little lower down, upon the belly, was another paper or label expressing these words: 'Evil to him that evil thinks, it is this that makes the nation stink;' in one hand was an orange, and in the other a bunch of turnips; they raised and fixed a gibbett in the street called The Hill, and upon this gibbett they hung by the neck the aforesaid figure or image, with a pair of horns set upon the head; that after many revileings and scoffings, attended with frequent shoutings and huzzaings, and uttering many scandalous and treasonable expressions, they next had the impudence and insolence most audaciously to fire shots at the body as it hung upon the gibbett, and with much mirth and joy, many times shouting and clapping their hands; and this they continued doing till two o'clock next morning, and after that they burned the body.

"That upon Captain Hamilton's going to Walsall upon the aforesaid day, he at first applied himself to Mr. Spurrier, the Mayor of the town, who is by trade a baker, and desired him to take cognizance of the affair in a judicial capacity, according to the complaint he then made to him of the disaffected and jacobitical proceeding of that day. He (the Mayor) then seemed surprised at the account he gave him, as was likewise the Town Clerk (Mr. Nevill), for they said they could not possibly know anything of the matter, as they both happened to be out of town upon that day. However, he at last prevailed upon the Mayor and Town Clerk to take the examinations of three dragoons belonging to a troop of the aforesaid regiment, and quartered there, which they with much reluctance complied with, alledging by way of excuse for their refusal that they were only about a dozen poor fellows that were remarkable for such loose and disorderly actions, and that they were not worth his notice; but upon his still persisting in his intention their examinations were taken, but the Mayor absolutely refused giving them their oaths, though they were ready to swear to their several examinations, and though he pressed and obliged them again and again to tender the men their oaths; they said it was altogether needless and unprecedented to swear a person to an examination where none were accused or mentioned in it. He then desired a copy of the three examinations, but this they likewise refused him, assigning for reason that they were very imperfect, and not done and wrote in a proper manner. He then next desired the Mayor to write a letter

by him to Major Chaban, at Shrewsbury, who commanded the regiment, and by whose order he had come to their town to make inspection into the behaviour of the people upon that day. as he was informed it was extremely rebellious. He promised he would write such a letter, but he was forced to come away next morning to Shrewsbury to make his report to the major without either succeeding in his solicitation and request for the men to be regularly deposed upon oath, obtaining a copy of the examinations, or bringing along with him the letter to the major he had promised. All this the said Captain Hamilton is willing to depose upon oath according to the best of his knowledge and information.

"CHARLES HAMILTON."

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1750.  
—

The Mayor was quite right in saying that it was unprecedented to swear a person to an examination where none were accused or mentioned in it. From the following warrant it appears that the circumstances narrated by Captain Hamilton were soon afterwards made the subject of a precise charge against (among others) Thomas Craddock, who was committed to prison until the next Assizes :

<p>"WALSALL BOROUGH AND FOREIGN IN STAFFORDSHIRE.</p>	}	<p>TO WIT: TO THE CONSTABLE OF THE SAID BOROUGH AND ALSO TO THE KEEPER OF HIS MAJESTY'S COMMON GAOL AT STAFFORD, IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF STAFFORD.</p>	Marlow MS.
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"Whereas, Thomas Craddock hath been charged upon oath before us of being guilty, together with divers other persons, of riotous and treasonable practices and proceedings in the said Borough of Walsall on the 29th day of May last, by having an image made and hanged upon a gibbet and intended to represent the person of his present Majesty King George, and calling the said image by the name of King George, to the great disturbance of his Majesty's peace, and to the great terror of his Majesty's good subjects—

"These are therefore in his Majesty's name to command you, the said constable, safely to convey the body of the said Thomas Craddock to the said Common Gaol for the said County of Stafford, and deliver the said Thomas Craddock there to the keeper of the said Gaol, together with this warrant. And we hereby command you, the said keeper of the said Gaol, to receive the body of the said Thomas Craddock into your gaol and custody, and him there safely to keep until he shall be discharged from thence by due course of law, and hereof fail not at your respective perills. Given under our hands and seals this 26th day of June, 1750.

"JOSEPH SPURRIER, Mayor (i.).

"JOHN BLACKHAM (ii.)."

Craddock and others were charged at Stafford Assizes on August 22nd, 1750. They were admitted to bail, but bound to appear at the Court of Queen's Bench, Westminster.

Additions to  
Erdswick,  
1844.

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1755.  
—

Birmingham  
Reference  
Library.

In June, 1755, the great steeple of Lichfield Cathedral was measured by a Mr. Cheese, of Walsall.

In 1770 appeared the first Directory of Birmingham, by Sketchley and Adams, which contains within its narrow limits a Directory of Walsall, Dudley, &c. Others of a similar nature appeared in 1777 and 1780. This latter is entitled a "Directory of Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley, and Willenhall, by Pearson and Wollason, 1780." The portion relating to Walsall contains about 300 names, of which the two following are curious examples: "John Gee, Chape Maker, Ditch End; John Edward, Baker, Hole End" (Dudley Street).

Pearce, p. 220.

Among the social developements of this time, may be noted the formation of lodges and friendly or sick societies, with which Walsall was richly endowed, possessing more than any other town in Staffordshire. The earliest was formed in 1768, was held at the Royal Oak, in Ablewell Street, and consisted of twenty-four members. By the close of the century the number of societies had increased to 17, besides several others known by the name of gift societies.

An incident is related of Dr. Johnson at this time, which has been the source of no little controversy. The passage is quoted from an early edition of Boswell's "Life of Johnson," by Dr. Thomas Dibden in his "Bibliomania," a famous work which was published in 1811. During the last visit of the Dr. to Lichfield, he was on one Tuesday morning missing. Returning in the evening he addressed his hostess as follows:

"MADAM,—I beg your pardon for the abruptness of my departure this morning, but I was constrained to it by my conscience. Fifty years ago I committed a breach of filial piety, which has ever since lain heavy on my mind, and has not until this day been expiated. My father, you recollect, was a bookseller, and had long been in the habit of attending Walsall Market, and opening a stall for the sale of his books during that day. Confined to his bed by indisposition, he requested of me this time fifty years to visit this market and attend the stall in his place. But madam, my pride prevented me from doing my duty, and I gave my father a refusal. To

do away with this sin of disobedience, I this day went in a postchaise to Walsall, and going into the market at the time of high business, uncovered my head and stood with it bare an hour before the stall which my father had used, exposed to the sneers of the bystanders and the inclemency of the weather; a penance by which I have propitiated heaven for this only instance I believe of contumacy towards my father."

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1771-1787.

This narration differs in several respects from modern copies of Boswell, which moreover give Uttoxeter and not Walsall as the place where the occurrence happened, and this is the generally received opinion. An examination of the early editions of Boswell, before the appearance of Dibden's work, would help to clear up the point. Other conditions as to locality, distance, access, and numerical importance, with the additional tradition of Walsall having for generations had a book stall in its market, would lend colour to the theory that the version published by Dibden is the correct one.

The following advertisement is taken from *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* for 1771, and is probably among the last records of the sale of a slave in England:

"NOVEMBER 11th, 1771.

TO be sold by Auction on Saturday, the 30th day of November instant, at the house of Wm. Webb, in the City of Lichfield, and known by the Sign of the 'Bakers' Arms,' between the Hours of Three and Five in the Evening of the same day, and subject to Articles that will be then and there produced (except sold by private Contract before the time), of which Notice will be given to the Public by John Heeley, of Walsall, Auctioneer and Salesman, a Negro Boy from Africa, supposed to be about Ten or Eleven years of Age. He is remarkably straight, well proportioned, speaks tolerably good English, of a mild Disposition, friendly, officious, sound, healthy, fond of Labour, and for Colour an excellent fine Black. For particulars enquire of the said John Heeley."

Presentments for Popish recusancy were very common at this time, and the following may be taken as a specimen from a numerous group of similar papers among the Town Records.

"WALSALL BOROUGH } THE PRESENTMENT OF JOHN THURSTAN, CONSTABLE  
AND FOREIGN, 1787. } OF THE SAID BORO.

I present Ralph Manley, Sarah Hurst, and Barnet Askew for Popish recusants, and have nothing else to present to the best of my knowledge."

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1791.  
—

The Rev. W.  
Whitehouse.

The year 1791 was marked by the erection of the chapel in Bridge Street. The congregation of this place of worship was derived originally from that of the Presbyterians of the old meeting house. Dissensions arose out of the Arian character of some of the hymns, which were gradually introduced, and the congregation broke up, part of them going to a small chapel in Dudley Street, which was opened in 1763. "The Arian ministers," says a local authority, "were very cautious how they preached, and sometimes one of them would preach in Dudley Street. The trust deed of the latter chapel was therefore drawn with great care as to the doctrines which should be preached in it, besides which the trustees had power to remove a minister. At one time the Bridge Street people made an effort to get the chapel in Fox's Court for themselves, but their claim was strongly opposed, and finally allowed to drop." In 1871, two old brick pillars, about thirty feet high, remnants of the old chapel in Dudley Street, were exposed in pulling down some old building into which it had been metamorphosed.

Pearce, p. 112.

Sir Charles  
Forster.

In 1791, this chapel growing too small, the one in Bridge Street was erected, the funds being obtained by public subscriptions and the sale of the old building in Dudley Street. The new chapel was opened in September, 1791, sermons being preached by the Rev. W. Jay, of Bath, and Captain Scott, an ex-captain of the 7th Dragoons, who preached in full regimentals. The cost of building was £2,125 13s. 0d. Rowland Hill and others preached on its behalf, and the debt was all cleared off by 1795. In that year the Rev. Thomas Grove became minister, and "for 23 years worked and won his way among all classes and denominations. He was noted for his piety and the simple eloquence of his preaching, which attracted for years the most influential congregations in the town." He was one of the seven students expelled from Oxford University, and has been described by another authority as "a model of a christian pastor,

who ruled his church with a rod of iron." The communion cloth now used is the same as the one used in 1790 in the meeting house in Dudley Street. A good view of Bridge Street chapel may be seen in the plate of the town, shewn in this work.

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1790-1798.

Among other building improvements may be noted the addition of the Assembly Rooms to the George Hotel, in 1793. At this time I find Walsall described as "a very large, sooty, ill-paved town, having a large church with a tower and spire, and at the end of the town a meeting-house, newly built." Mr. Shaw, writing two years later, says, "I have lately taken two drawings of the place (Walsall), one for my history, to be engraved at the expense of the Corporation, the other I submit to you." He describes the church tower as being "far from elegant," and not the reverse, as generally quoted.

Gentleman's  
Magazine.

In 1794, the Birmingham Canal Company obtained new powers, by which they were enabled to extend their canal from Wednesbury to Walsall, a branch  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles in length. The Wyrley and Essington Canal was projected in 1792, and the branch from Bloxwich to the Birchills was constructed at this time. The "Extension Act" from Birchills to Pelsall Wood was obtained in 1794.

The year 1798 was an eventful one for England. The French Government had collected a vast army for the purpose of an invasion, and the country was for the moment in a state of panic. The people of Walsall were not behindhand in offering help and sympathy, and the following petition was addressed to the Mayor, Mr. Adams:

Town Records

"SIR.—In consequence of the exertions now making in various parts of the Kingdome to assist Government in the Defence of the Country at this most important crisis by voluntary contributions, and under the impression that such exertions must prove the most effectual to repel the destruction threatened against us universally by an obstinate and implacable foe; we, whose names are undersigned, request that you will call a meeting of the inhabitants of the Borough and Foreign, that books may be opened for subscriptions, and the contributions of those persons received who may be inclined to step forward in so laudable and Patriotic a cause. Walsall, February 27th, 1798."

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1798.  
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Pearce, p. 221.

At this time the ancient custom of perambulating the parish boundaries, or as it was called "beating the bounds," was still performed. The ceremony took place on one of the Rogation days, and is still adhered to in many parishes. In Walsall on account of the large size of the parish, which covers about 10,000 acres, it was performed in three different directions in three successive years. Prayers were first read in the church, and then the vicar, accompanied by various officials, friends, and a number of the populace, walked the boundaries, and were at different points regaled with bread and cheese and ale. The first year the procession started from Shaver's End, taking in Walsall Wood and its neighbourhood. The second year from the Butts Gate (near the centre of the present Arboretum), through Bloxwich and Bentley to James Bridge. The third year from James Bridge to Bescot, Barr, Longwood, and thence back to the Butts Gate. Afterwards the vicar, officers, and friends dined together. Prior to the Reformation the ceremony was a very imposing one; the lord of the manor was usually present, the priests carrying banners and crosses, and the whole of the parishioners following. The last recorded perambulation of Walsall parish was in the years 1805, 1806, and 1807, on which occasions dinner was served at the Dragon by Mr. Wm. Bagley.

The century now closing was marked by no circumstance more important than that of the reconstruction of the roads in the neighbourhood and the consequent diversion of traffic through the town, a step which gave an immense impetus to its commerce by bringing it into direct and easy communication with London, Birmingham, Wolverhampton, and other great manufacturing centres.

Act of Parliament.

Prior to 1748 Walsall lay completely out of the line of general traffic, a result due in a great measure, if not entirely, to the "narrow, tortuous, ruinous, and dangerous condition of the roads." Both the Birmingham and Stafford roads were circuitous and

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1748.  
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winding, ill-kept and so narrow that only here and there was there room for two vehicles to pass each other. The great artery of communication across the country was the Old Chester Road, through Stonnall and Brownhills, along which ran the coaches from London, Birmingham, and the South to Stafford and Chester, then the starting point for Ireland. The wagon track lay through Aldridge and Shire Oak, just beyond which it fell again into the main road. Another great road ran through Coleshill, Lichfield, and Stone to Manchester, Liverpool, and the North-West, while yet another passed through Birmingham to Wolverhampton. As already stated, the roads leading into Walsall were practically impassible, and "dangerous to travellers in the winter season." Entering the town itself the Birmingham traffic had to pass down New Street and High Street, while north and south the only outlets were by Rushall Street and Dudley Street. Ablewell Street was not yet a carriage way, and Bridge Street was as yet unthought of.

The first Turnpike Act relating to Walsall was passed in 1748, and applied to the roads leading to Barr Beacon and to Snails Green, on the Birmingham Road, and from Walsall to Park Brook and Wolverhampton. The preamble to this Act states that "by reason of the nature of the soil and the many heavy carriages frequently passing through the same, the roads referred to are become very ruinous and dangerous for travellers in the winter season, and the price of carriage of goods is by reason thereof much advanced, to the great discouragement of the traders and inhabitants of the town, &c., and also to travellers in general." The turnpike was at Wood End, on the Sutton Road, where the old road to London may still be traced. But little appears to have been done under the Act of 1748 towards improving the communication with Birmingham and Wolverhampton, and as its powers expired in 1769 and the roads had again fallen into a bad state, a fresh Act was obtained



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1766.  
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in 1771, which contained additional powers “to turn, vary, and alter the course of some of the said roads, in order to make the same shorter and more convenient to travellers than they are at present.” This latter Act applied solely to the Wolverhampton Road, and it is therefore presumable that the remaining roads on the Birmingham side were in a more efficient state of repair. Much public dissatisfaction must nevertheless have existed, for the Rolls of Parliament of this time contain more than a dozen petitions from the inhabitants of Walsall regarding the roads. Opinion was, however, divided. One petition remarks that “Park Street and Rushall Street are in good repair, the pavement sound, the market cross and pump are to be removed.”

Rolls of Parlia-  
ment.

At an enquiry held in 1766, Mr. Jacob Smith was examined, and said “that the roads leading out of the town were very ruinous, narrow and incommodious, &c. If a good road was made from the Brook in Walsall over the lands of the Countess of Mountrath, Richard Persehouse, Esq., and Mr. Samuel Corbett, and along Ablewell Street to the present turnpike road leading from Walsall to Birmingham, it would be a public advantage, the present road being through the streets in Walsall, which are very sharp and narrow and dangerous; that the High Street rises from west to east 12 feet in about one hundred yards, and in Rushall Street there is not room for two carriages to pass, the widest part being not more than 12 or 14 and the narrowest not more than 10 feet wide, which is the greatest thoroughfare in the town. That from the Brook to the Cross Way, going into Rushall Street, is in length 375 yards, and from the Cross Way to Ablewell Street 235 yards, equal to a total of 610 yards. The proposed road (Bridge Street) is only 440. That the turning at the top of High Street into Rushall Street is very sharp, dangerous and inconvenient for carriages, the same not being above 10 feet wide. That the Market House stands in the middle of High Street, with a

space of about 10 feet from the houses on each side, and is within 15 yards of the said narrow turning into Rushall Street. That there is a pump at the top of High Street, so that in frosty weather the street is a sheet of ice and passengers dare not ride down the said street, &c. In frosty weather he has seen passengers obliged to get out of a post-chaise at the bottom of High Street, and it is with difficulty the horses could then draw the chaise up. That a broad-wheel wagon was going down the said street with both hind wheels locked, when the thill horse and that next him were thrown down, the hill being so steep. The pump makes it a sheet of ice. He is a large manufacturer, and is obliged to have the carrier's wagon only half loaded and to have a cart to follow on account of the steepness of the streets." Mr. Joseph Curtis said he thought it "the worst town to pass through he ever saw." The Rev. Sir Richard Wrottesley also stated that he "has been stopped an hour by a carriage which was unloading before he could pass with his post-chaise." Other witnesses spoke in opposition to the proposed Bill.

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1766.  
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Rolls of Par-  
liament.

The result of this enquiry was that an Act was obtained, and the same year (1766) the roads from Walsall to Lichfield and Dudley, and to Churchbridge were turnpiked, and Bridge Street, or the New Road, and Ablewell Street were ordered to be constructed. The Act recites "that it would be of great public convenience if a road was made from the 'Brook' in Walsall over certain lands to Ablewell Street, and if Ablewell Street was repaired as far as the turnpike road leading from Walsall to Birmingham." The street thus constructed was called the "New Road."

Before the Act of 1766 the road from Walsall to Cannock and Stafford lay through Green Lane, Bloxwich, Fishley, and Great Wyrley. Under the new Act the present road was made as far as Churchbridge, where it dropped into the Watling Street. From Churchbridge to Cannock and Stafford the road was left in its ancient state, and was so bad that until

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1774-1793.  
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1793 the route from Walsall to Stafford was by Churchbridge, Spread Eagle, and Penkridge.

The result of these improvements soon began to tell upon the traffic, and the following advertisement from *Aris's Birmingham Gazette* of October 17th, 1774, is both instructive and interesting:

"TO be Let and entered upon at Christmas next, all that new erected and compleat Inn, in Walsall, called 'The New Inn,' standing near the Bridge and New Road, and conveniently situated for the reception of noble-men and gentlemen travelling through Walsall. The business of the said inn is daily increasing on account of the turnpike roads being made exceeding good from Walsall to Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Lichfield, and Castle Bromwich, and also from Walsall to a place called Churchbridge, on the Chester Road. The New Inn is genteelly fitted up, and the bedding and furniture are mostly new and very good, which, with the chaises and horses, will be sold to any person inclined to take the said inn at a fair appraisement," &c.

The first coach of which we have mention was  
*Aris's Birmingham Gazette.* "The Old and Original Shrewsbury, Wolverhampton, Walsall, and Birmingham Fly," which is advertised in the same paper for November 30th, 1778. The fares from Walsall to London were, inside £1 7s., outside 13s. 6d. In 1780 a coach ran from London to Holyhead through Birmingham and Walsall. The fare from London to Walsall by this was £1 11s. 6d.

In 1784 Mr. Fletcher, of the George Hotel, obtained a new Act of Parliament to make the present road from Walsall to Stafford, and also caused the Birmingham Road to be widened and straightened as far as Hampstead Bridge. A plan of the road at this time, with the projected improvements, was made by John Snape, in 1787, and may be seen in the Free Library. The following year an Act was obtained which recites that the roads to Hampstead Bridge, to Sutton Coldfield, and to Wolverhampton "are ruinous and much out of repair, and in many places narrow and incommodious." The Birmingham Road was then re-constructed as far as Hampstead, passing on to Birmingham through Handsworth.

In 1793 the proprietors of the George Hotel in Walsall obtained an Act to turnpike and improve

the road between Churchbridge and Stafford. By this alteration the road from Birmingham to Liverpool, Manchester, Chester, and the north, through Walsall, was made four miles shorter, and thus the importance of the latter town as a thoroughfare was largely increased. The old routes were deserted, and the whole of the Birmingham traffic began to flow through the town. The Bull's Head, in Rushall Street, and the George became great coaching houses, while some of the coaches called at the Bradford Arms. The following coaches are said by Mr. W. H. Duignan to have passed through the town daily:—The "Red Rover" and the "Railway," from London to Manchester; the "Albion," from London to Chester; the "Crown Prince," the "Aurora," and the "Magnet," from London to Liverpool; the "Times" and the "Mail," from Birmingham to Sheffield; the "Standard," "Pearl," and the "Rapid," to Derby; the "York House," from Bristol to Liverpool; and the "Mail," from Manchester to Bath. Other coaches ran to Birmingham, Dudley, Wolverhampton, and Lichfield, and still others are mentioned by the late Peter Potter, Esq., in the *Walsall Observer* for February, 1878. Two of the old drivers are yet well remembered in the town, Stephen Howse, who drove the Gloucester Mail, and Bob Newman, who died a few years since. "Bob," says Mr. Duignan, "once drove the Queen, when Princess Victoria, and afterwards her mother, the Duchess of Kent, from Wolverhampton to Shifnal. The Princess's servants paid the post boys 6s.6d., but the Duchess's paid 8s., a difference remembered by Bob as long as he lived." Many anecdotes are told of the rivalry between the various coaches, and the different appointments of each. How the Chester coach changed at the Bull's Head, and how, in coming down High Street, the guard fired off his blunderbus as he passed the George, in token of defiance. How the George possessed 106 coach and posting horses at Walsall, and 35 at other stations on the road; and how it

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Walsall  
Observer.  
Feb., 1878.

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1782-1787.  
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was the custom of every commercial traveller to keep his own horse and gig. Interesting papers on the coaching days, by Mr. Duignan and the late Mr. Potter, may be referred to in the *Walsall Observer* for 1878 and 1882.

A good plan of the roads in the neighbourhood, which is dated 1826, may be seen in the Free Library.

Our last improvement with regard to the roads was not carried out until the year 1831, when an Act was obtained for making a new road from Snail's Green, near the Scott's Arms, through Perry Barr, to Birmingham, the old one passing by Hampstead Bridge and Handsworth old church.

In 1832 we find the following local notice:—  
Wolverhampton  
Chronicle.
 “The Right Hon. Viscount Lorton and family passed through Walsall on Thursday morning last, on their way to the Metropolis, and changed horses at the George Hotel. His Lordship's carriage is the first that has passed along the new line of road recently opened between Walsall and Birmingham.”

Such are some of the important results due to the formation of good and passable roads, attained by the exertions of Mr. Yates, Mr. Fletcher, and his successors, Messrs. Fletcher and Sharratt, of the George, names of which Walsall may justly feel proud, as having laid the foundations of her present position.

In the Walsall Free Library hangs a plan of the town as it appeared about this time, taken by the John Snape before mentioned, in the year 1782. It shows the old Market Cross, the position of buildings on the Church Hill, the sources of the water supply from the Vicarage Field, and many other points of interest. There is also a plan containing profiles of the several streets.

In 1787 appeared Tunnicliff's “Survey of the County of Stafford.” This work contains an early “Directory” of Walsall, but it is limited to the principal merchants, most of which are still well-known names, as Adams, Elwell, Fletcher, Forster, Spurrier, Stokes, Stubbs, &c. The principal inns

are given as the Bull's Head and the Green Dragon. The George Hotel is not mentioned, though it must at this period have been a rising hostelry.

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HISTOR  
1785.

About 1785, the Rev. John Bradford was a dissenting minister here, and he has left us in his "Memoirs" anything but a complimentary account of the men and manners of his time. He was a follower of the Countess of Huntingdon, whose principles were those of the Calvinistic Methodists, a sect which has now become almost identical with the Congregational or Independent body. He was educated at Oxford and ordained, but having adopted her views, he was sent by the countess to Brighton. In his "Memoirs" he says, "From Brighton I went to Walsall, in Staffordshire, to an old dissenting meeting. I there became acquainted with a people not to be equalled in the world for pride, bigotry, blindness, and ignorance of the very outlines of religion; mere formalists void of all experience. I called the meeting house a dormitory. Here I learned the meaning of preaching faith as some call it. They would come to me with such complaints as this, 'Sir, you do not preach faith, we could wish to know your opinion upon faith.' I got some old authors on the subject, and drew up a long list of various sorts and kinds of faith, but was well convinced that faith was no system. There I learned to know more clearly the meaning of Paul testifying repentance and faith. I found Walsall a profitable school. Here I saw the mystery of iniquity, dressed up without gown or bands. I saw there as much Papists as those at Rome. My soul loathed their dry formal prayers more than ever. Here I gave offence upon offence, and I believe they were as glad to get rid of me as I was to leave them. From Walsall, Lady Huntingdon sent me into Wales, and it is now with pleasure I look back upon the life and power of godliness, and the love and hospitality I met with at many places. This was a complete contrast with Walsall, as great a contrast as ever I met with in

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1792.

all my life. The zeal, life, and generosity of the one, certainly stood in direct contrast with the deadness, formality, and stinginess of the other. From Wales I came to reside at Birmingham, Lady Huntingdon having purchased the old playhouse." He died in 1805, and another writer remarks, "His extreme and narrow views blighted the prospects of usefulness, which opened before him in the earlier portions of his ministry."

In the year 1792, the threatened extinction of the buckle trade gave rise to much alarm in the town, as it was then an important branch of industry. A deputation was sent up to London, and was introduced to the Prince of Wales by Sheridan. The Prince was asked for his support, "fearing that if the stagnation of trade caused by the patronage of shoestrings and slippers continued, miseries, emigrations, and other horrible consequences must inevitably ensue." The Prince of Wales ordered the principal officers of his court into his presence, and told them that they must from that moment discard the use of shoestrings, while he expressed the hope that they would never offend him by disusing so important an article of British manufacture as buckles. The Dukes of York and Clarence followed his example, and the deputation, which included representatives also from Wolverhampton, Birmingham, and London, invited the chief members of the Royal households to a splendid dinner to commemorate the success of their cause. For a short time buckles became again fashionable, and most elaborate ones were worn by the Royal family, but by slow degrees they again fell into disuse. In 1820, George III. discarded buckles altogether, and the Walsall paper of that day announced the fact that the town was ruined.

Two associations of a similar character deserve to be noticed here, the first of which was a corps of cavalry and infantry, called the Walsall Volunteer Association, established in 1798. At that date the whole country was roused to a sense

of action. The "Army of England," as it was called by the French, was threatening our southern shores, and the dread of Bonaparte and a French invasion had reached a climax. In all directions volunteers were enrolled, and Walsall was determined not to be behindhand in furnishing her quota. A public subscription provided the necessary funds, and on May 12th, 1798, a meeting was held in the Guildhall at which a letter was read from the Marquis of Stafford, expressing the satisfaction with which his Majesty had accepted this loyal offer. The result of the meeting was that a corps, numbering in all forty-three gentlemen, was established. Joseph Scott, Esq., afterwards Sir Joseph, was chosen captain. The colours were presented amid much popular enthusiasm at Barr Beacon on September 23rd, 1799, and the officers and men were afterwards entertained by the Corporation at the George Hotel, at the cost of one hundred guineas. In 1802 the troops were dissolved, when Captain Scott was presented with a silver cup valued at fifty guineas, in recognition of his untiring efforts for the success of the cause.

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The other association is the "Queen's Own Royal Yeomanry," which regiment was formed on July 4th, 1794, and to which Walsall contributed one of the original troops under the command of Captain William Tennant. The same causes which produced the former of these associations gave birth to the Yeomanry, which still constitute the oldest part of the Volunteer force, being instituted by Lord Chatham in 1761. The regiment has from time to time done good service, and a complete record of its history and actions was published in 1870.

The first notice we have of the Walsall troop is in 1798, when it assembled at Lichfield, under Major Tennant, and performed ten days' duty. In September, 1800, owing to the high price of provisions, riots were prevalent throughout the county, and the Lichfield and Walsall troop, under the command of Sir Nigel Gresley, was on duty from September

Records of the  
Regiment,  
p. 14.



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—

11th to the 15th at Walsall and Wolverhampton, and were publicly thanked by the Mayor, Mr. Stubbs, the Corporation and principal inhabitants of Walsall, "for the prompt assistance they had rendered the civil power in suppressing the riots in the neighbourhood."

Records of the  
Regiment,  
p. 61.

In October, 1816, there was a disturbance in Walsall, and Captain Terry was called upon by the Magistrates to assist with his troop in quelling the riot, but owing to the men being at that time without any uniform, he was unable to proceed to the assistance of the civil power, and it was found needful to call in a detachment of regular troops.

Ibid, pp. 61, 62.

In 1822 the Walsall Troop was again called out to suppress a riot at Bilston, and it was again in service in 1824 and 1826.

Ibid. pp. 57, 59.

In December, 1831, the Walsall Troop and the Militia Staff were at Bilston, owing to the disturbed state of the district. The Corporation accounts contain various entries showing the unsettled state of the town at this time. Thus, the Corporation paid Mr. Fletcher:

	£	s.	d.
For express horses, and refreshments for soldiers during the disturbances in December, 1831	2	0	0
Mr. Jukes, for refreshment for soldiers	9	4	
Dickenson, for carriage of staves, &c.	16	0	
S. Mason, for serving special constables, &c.	2	0	0
Constables' staffs	1	13	4
Mr. West, Police special officer	27	0	0
Mr. Mason, for painting 250 constables' staffs	6	5	0
Mr. Heeley, conducting prosecutions against rioters	30	4	8
Repairing chairs in Mayor's Parlour...	2	3	0
For work at house occupied by soldiers	8	0	

The following letter bears date, Walsall, Dec. 23rd, 1831:

"SIR.—At a meeting of the Mayor and Commonalty of the Borough and Foreign, in Common Hall assembled, on Tuesday last, the following resolutions were unanimously agreed upon:—That the thanks of the Mayor, Magistrates, and members of the Corporation be presented to the officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates of the Walsall, Lichfield, Tamworth, and Burton troops of the Staffordshire Yeomanry Cavalry, for the prompt and efficient services rendered by them to the town and neighbourhood of Walsall, in the preservation of the peace during the late disturbances. Signed." &c.

In 1839 there was a most destructive fire in Walsall, and a detachment of the Walsall troop, consisting of eighteen men, under Lieutenant Forster, was called out to protect the property which escaped the flames, and it was dismissed with the thanks of the Mayor the same day. Ge  
Hi

In July, 1839, occurred the Chartist Riots in Birmingham, and the Walsall troop, under Captain Forster, was marched to Handsworth, where it was employed in patrolling the neighbourhood and keeping the peace. Recon  
Rec  
p. 1

In July, 1842, there were great colliery riots throughout the county, and the Walsall colliers were prominent in stopping all work in the neighbourhood. The Walsall troop, aided by the 3rd Dragoon Guards, and a force of special constables, succeeded in repressing what had the appearance of an alarming outbreak. Similar disturbances occurred in August of the same year, and were suppressed in a like manner. Ibid.

In September, 1842, the Duchess of Gloucester paid a visit to Lord Dartmouth, at Sandwell, and Her Royal Highness was escorted both to and from Birmingham by the Walsall troop, under Captain Forster and Lieutenant Chawner, and the following year they formed a guard of honour to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, when they visited Sir Robert Peel at Drayton Manor. The last occasion on which the troop has been called to the assistance of the civil power was in March, 1855, when serious riots broke out among the colliers, and the Walsall troop was employed in dispersing the mob at Darlaston. Meanwhile, great alarm was occasioned at Walsall by the arrival of a mob from Bilston, which committed some damage to the shops, but the depredations were put an end to by the police. The corps is voluntary, and is composed of eleven troops. Each member provides his own horse, the arms and accoutrements being provided by Government. They have six drill days during the year, and one entire week is spent Ibid.

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annually at Lichfield. At the present time the Walsall troop numbers over fifty members, commanded by Captain H. de G. Parker Jervis, of Little Aston Hall.

Campbell,  
"Life of Mrs.  
Siddons."

Shaw,  
Appendix.

Life of Kemble.

We must here notice two public characters, whose connection with the town is well deserving of recognition. The first of these was Mr. Siddons, husband of the great tragic actress of that name. He was born in Rushall Street at a public-house known by the sign of the "London Apprentice," kept by his father, who is said to have met his death by accident in sparring or wrestling with one Denston. He was intended for a barber, but from an early age exhibited a fondness for the stage, and in the winter of 1766, we find him and his friends performing the play of *Douglas* in an old malthouse on the Lime Pit Bank, belonging to a Mr. Samuel Wood. Whether or not he was then with the Kembles is uncertain, but the following February he was a member of their company, and at Worcester took the part of James, Duke of Richmond, in a play called *Charles I.* Miss Kemble, then fourteen, took the part of the Princess. When she was about seventeen, Mr. Siddons, who was still an actor in her father's Company, began to pay his attentions to her, which seemed to meet with a ready acquiescence. Mr. Siddons seems to have studied his business in Birmingham, and being handsome and active, and endowed with talents so variable, that his range of characters is said to have extended from Hamlet to Harlequin, he acquired a good deal of provincial popularity. At this juncture Mr. Siddons became jealous, and wrote a long poem entitled "The Discarded Lover." He proposed an immediate elopement, but this Miss Kemble firmly declined, and the lover becoming impatient was dismissed for the time being from the Company. Before leaving he was allowed a benefit, which resulted in a crowded house. At the conclusion of the play he sang the song of his own composition already mentioned, which describes the pangs of his own attachment, the coldness of Miss Kemble, and

the perfidy of her parents. "Their applauses were still resounding after his last bow, when Colin retiring into the Green Room, was met by the stately mother of Miss Kemble, who was fully prepared to avenge the honour of the family, and crowned Mr. Siddons' benefit by boxing his ears very heartily." How the quarrel was settled is not known, but in November, 1773 he was married to Miss Kemble at Trinity Church, Coventry, and on October 4th of the following year their eldest son Henry was born at Wolverhampton. Mr. Siddons is represented as having been a fair and very handsome man, and sedate and graceful in his manners. As an actor he was valuable chiefly from his versatility, besides which he was very quick and could master the longest dramatic character between night and night and deliver the language accurately, but he soon forgot it all. Boaden says, "I remember that Mr. Siddons once told me, that I must not be astonished to hear, that he himself had been of greater value in the country than his wife, from his versatility as an actor." His talents though good became so obscured by those of his wife, that he retired into private life. In the summer of 1804, she was laid up with lumbago at her house at Hampstead. "Mr. Siddons and she were now by a sad fatality invalids with the same rheumatic affection. Their new abode on the day of their arrival much delighted the old gentleman. He ate his dinner with uncommon relish, and looking out at the beautiful prospect said, 'Sally this will cure all our ailments.'" However she was confined to bed for weeks, and after her recovery he went to live at Bath for the benefit of his rheumatism. Here he lived until 1808, when he was seized suddenly with his last illness, which put an end to his life on March 11th of that year.

Thomas Haskey, or Askins, a ventriloquist of considerable power, was another character of this period. His father was a filer, and one of the bell-ringers of St. Matthew's Church. The son ran away from home, joined the army, and was engaged in the

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HISTORICAL  
1794.  
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Boaden,  
"Life of  
Siddons."

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1794.  
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MS. Note by  
Hamper.

American War, where he lost a leg, and was in consequence pensioned off with one shilling a day. He returned to Walsall and earned a livelihood by assisting gardeners in making holes in the ground with his wooden leg to set potatoes in. It is said that as a lad he was completely ignorant of his powers of mimicry, and that he discovered them by imitating O'Burn, the great Irish ventriloquist, who died in 1796. "It came to him," he says, "as he was singing the second verse of 'God save the King,' and has left him twelve or fourteen times, returning at various short intervals. Haskins, or, as he calls himself, Askey, now lives at Birmingham, 1821." He was a frequenter of Stanton's Theatre, which was for many seasons located at the Dragon Assembly Room, and when he was there he amused the audience by carrying on an imaginary dialogue with someone in another part of the house. The Earl of Dudley invited him on several occasions to Himley for the purpose of entertaining his friends, and it is related that he had the pride always to hire a post chaise to take him there from Walsall. In 1796 he was introduced to the stage of Sadler's Wells Theatre, London, probably by the agency of Mr. Siddons, who had an interest in that theatre. At this place he was very successful, and on the occasion of his benefit in the season of 1796 cleared no less a sum than £200.

Hawkins, "Life  
of Edmund  
Kean."

Among the great actors who have from time to time visited the town may be mentioned Edmund Kean. In 1808 he was a member of Watson's company, then performing at Walsall, "and it was here," says his biographer, "that he first experienced the ill-effects of hostile criticism. The gaberdine of Shylock and the deformities of Richard did not prevent the sagacious and observant critic of the *Staffordshire Advertiser* from finding out that the figure of the new actor was 'insignificant,' and on the strength of this insignificant figure he, speaking of Edmund's representation of Gloster, insisted that Mr. Kean was most misplaced, that he had never seen

a man less gifted as a tragedian, and that, 'without energy, dignity, or the advantages of a voice, he dragged through the heroic scenes with a dull monotony oppressive to himself and doubly so to the audience.' " These strictures did not have the effect of putting it out of Kean's power to win a triumphant benefit at the Walsall Theatre in *Richard III.*, by which he cleared £12 for his benefit. "With a hopeful heart, Kean, having paid his debts with the £12, made his way to Lichfield." Playing shortly afterwards at Birmingham, he took the parts of Hotspur and Henry IV., and was highly praised by Stephen Kemble, who played Falstaff.

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## THE PRESENT CENTURY.

We now enter upon the final period of the history of Walsall, and one marked by such ceaseless change and development that the aged townsman, when questioned, will shake his head and appear hardly able to realise the extent of the transformation.

**Census Returns** Taking first the population, we find that at the first census taken in May, 1801, it stood as follows :

THE BOROUGH.					
Inhabited houses	...	...	...	...	1,043
Uninhabited do.	...	...	...	...	135
Total of houses					1,178
Males	...	...	...	...	2,500
Females	...	...	...	...	2,677
Total of persons					5,177
THE FOREIGN.					
Inhabited houses	...	...	...	...	941
Uninhabited do.	...	...	...	...	50
Total of houses					991
Males	...	...	...	...	2,774
Females	...	...	...	...	2,448
Total of persons					5,222

The total population thus amounted to 10,399. In this same year the poor in the workhouse amounted to 197. At the next census, taken in 1811, the population had increased by 790 persons.

The following table shows the progressive growth of the population, but it must be borne in mind that until the census of 1801 no absolute reliance can be placed upon the figures:

Anno.				
1498	Estimated population	...	...	1,809
1686	"	"	"	5,500
1801	Parliamentary census	...	...	10,399
1811	"	"	"	11,189
1821	"	"	"	11,914
1831	"	"	"	15,064
1841	"	"	"	20,852
1851	"	"	"	26,816
1861	"	"	"	39,692
1871	"	"	"	48,529
1881	"	"	"	58,802

The following analysis of the last census shews the difference between the Parliamentary Borough and the Municipal Borough. In the former a number of houses on the Mellish Road and about that part are included, but they are not included for Municipal purposes. By the "Gas Purchase and Borough Extension Act" of 1876, a part of the parish of Rushall, containing 94 acres and 611 houses, with an estimated population of 3,055 persons, was added to the Municipal Borough. Vide G. H.

## PARLIAMENTARY BOROUGH.

		1871.	1881.
Walsall Borough	...	8,291	7,643
" Foreign	...	29,454	37,323
Rushall	...	2,556	4,191
Bloxwich	...	8,717	10,252
Total	...	<u>49,008</u>	<u>59,409</u>

## MUNICIPAL BOROUGH.

		1871.	1881.
Walsall Borough	...	8,291	7,643
" Foreign	...	29,454	37,323
Rushall	...	—	3,584
Bloxwich	...	8,717	10,252
Total	...	<u>46,452</u>	<u>58,802</u>

In 1859 the total number of burgesses for the whole borough was 1,193. In 1873 the number had



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risen to 8,958. The Burgess Roll for 1885 is given as follows:

Walsall.	Population ... ..	58,795
	Inhabited houses ... ..	11,046
	Burgess Roll—Men ... ..	10,219
	„ „ --Women ... ..	1,242

We may pass on now to notice the extension of the town, and one by one examine the steps which have led to its present large dimensions.

The year 1800 was marked by the foundation of the first public library. It was formed on November 14th of that year by the Rev. Thomas Bowen, who was then minister of the Old Meeting House. This gentleman was also master of an academy in Rushall Street, and was a man of some literary attainments, for he published several educational works and was the inventor of several mathematical instruments. Through his liberality a room and librarian were provided at his own house, and here the library flourished for some years. About 1813 it was removed to a more commodious public room at Valentine and Throsby's, in High Street. In 1830 it was determined to make a still more spirited venture, and on August 16th a public meeting was held, which resulted in the erection, in June, 1831, of St. Matthew's Hall by a company, at the cost of 1,600 guineas, raised by shares of £10 each. On one side of the vestibule was the news room, and on the other the Library Reading Room, which contained about 3,000 volumes. The subscription proved to be too high for the success of the undertaking, which soon proved a failure, and the building, after remaining unoccupied for some years, was sold, after much litigation, to Mr. Darwall for £620, and finally converted into a County Court, the upper room being used as a Freemason's Hall and for musical entertainments. The library itself was removed to Mr. Robinson's, on The Bridge, and a "Literary and Philosophical Institution" was added, for the promotion on Christian principles, of literature, science

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Book.

and art, by means of lectures, discussions, a library, museum of natural history, antiquities, &c. Here it remained until 1875, when it was given up and the books were presented to the Free Library Committee.

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In 1803 a Theatre was erected in the Square. It was built by subscription in shares of £50, each subscriber receiving interest for his money and a silver ticket transferable at pleasure. The inside was neatly fitted up, and a full house would average from £50 to £60. Although visited by some good companies and actors, such as Kean, Foote, &c., it did not pay the shareholders, and was after a few years converted into business premises.

About this time the boundaries and privileges of the parish gave rise to several important legal quibbles between the Borough and the Foreign. In one case, tried in 1803, the churchwardens of the Foreign for St. Matthew's Church objected to pay their contribution towards the ornaments and incidental charges of the mother church. These expenses were shared equally by the Borough and the Foreign, but the representatives of the latter contended that they had to support a chapel of ease at Bloxwich, and that, therefore, they were not liable for such payments. The case was submitted to a Mr. William Mott, who ruled that the inhabitants of the Foreign were parishioners of Walsall equally with the inhabitants of the Borough, and therefore that the objection could not be maintained.

Vestr.

A few years later, in 1813, a trial involving questions of greater magnitude was instituted by the inhabitants of the Foreign against the Borough. The question at issue was the liability of certain persons renting land in the Foreign, but residing and paying rates in the Borough, to be rated by the overseers of the Foreign. From the time of Elizabeth to the year 1673, the poor of each township had been supported by a general rate over the whole district. By a statute passed in this latter year, it was agreed that the Borough and Foreign

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should separate in the maintenance of their poor, and should have separate rates, accounts, workhouses, and overseers. A condition in this agreement provided that rateable property, whether in the Borough or Foreign, should be rated to the poor of that district in which the occupier resided. A large number of persons residing in the Borough rented property in the Foreign, some of which was debateable land, and some interesting evidence was given as to the exact limits of parts of the Borough boundary, which was shown to be very uncertain, if not altogether unknown. In the first trial the rate levied by the Foreign on these occupiers was quashed, but upon being carried to a higher court, the decision was reversed, and the custom of rating resident occupiers was declared illegal. The question was not finally settled until 1818, when it was brought before the Lord Chief Justice, who decided that the agreement made in 1673 could not be cancelled.

Vestry Book.

Another source of constant dispute was the question of the church rates, and it appears from the churchwardens' books that the wardens of the Borough and Foreign had so far back as 1712 been at variance upon the point. From 1760 to 1765 they were again at law. In 1770 another dispute took place about £14 8s. 6d., "due from the Foreign for law charges in 1765, and about the lower flight of church steps," &c. In the year 1830, the imposition of this tax gave rise to a great deal of angry controversy, and numerous stormy vestry meetings were held to decide the matter. The question at issue was, "whether there is in this parish any legal custom for rating the Borough and Foreign respectively by separate and distinct rates, either in equal or other proportion; or whether there should be according to the Common Law a general rate for the whole parish." It was decided that the latter was legally right, and on the 8th November at a vestry meeting, a resolution was carried authorizing the churchwardens of the Borough to apply to the Court at Lichfield, for the purpose

of citing the churchwardens of the Foreign of Walsall, to show cause why a general rate over the whole of the parish should not be made for the payment of the sum of £460 6s. 0d., the estimated expenses of the current year, voted at a general vestry on the 20th August, in lieu of the same being raised on equal moieties, and for any other purpose tending to carry the said proposition into effect, or for making a rate for that purpose. The suit was shortly afterwards removed from the Ecclesiastical Court of Lichfield to that of the King's Bench.

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In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for December, 1804, is a letter on the scarcity of small coinage, shillings and sixpences, at the beginning of the century. The writer says, "much inconvenience is felt in this neighbourhood for want of silver in change. There are many collieries, lime works, forges, and furnaces which employ hundreds of people, and the masters to pay their workmen issue cards of various sorts, from one shilling to ten each, nominal value. These cards have been brought to the market town adjacent, and paid for provisions, clothing and other things, so that they became a drug, and very little hard cash is to be seen. Moreover, many of these have been counterfeited, and the holders have been obliged to sustain the loss," &c.

Another insight into local life is gained from some remarks on Walsall Gaol, by a Mr. Nields to Dr. Lettsom. He says, "Town Gaol, Wm. Mason gaoler, salary none, fees 3/4 and 2d. to the Town Clerk on commitment of every felon. Two rooms under the Town Hall, that for debtors has a fireplace, it is down five steps with an iron grated window to the street, but not being glazed and no inside shutters is extremely cold, straw only upon the damp brick floor to sleep upon. A door opens out of this room into a dark dungeon for felons, about three yards square. Adjoining to the debtors room is one for felons, with an iron grated window to the street, and two dark dungeons with straw on the

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floor to sleep on. Allowance to debtors and felons 2d. per day. No court, no sewer, no water. The beadle told me he brought it to the grating for the prisoners. Felons for petty offences remain here till the Quarter Sessions. The debtors are confined here for less than 10s. November 2nd, 1802 no prisoners."

In 1806 a proposal was made by the Government to put a tax upon pig iron, and large meetings against the measure were held in Walsall and Wolverhampton. The agitation carried on in these towns proved successful, and the proposal was abandoned.

In 1809 a small market-house was erected on the slope of the church hill facing High Street, and it may yet be seen in the plate of the town in Shaw's History. The building met with scant appreciation, and during the latter years of its existence formed a receptacle for the stalls, which are used in the ordinary market. In 1852 it was removed, together with a lot of old buildings, for the sake of widening and improving the approach to the church, and the roadway was then made into its present form.

This same year (1809), gave birth to the Grand Stand on the racecourse, which was removed in 1879. Walsall races were then fashionable in the sporting world, and attracted numerous visitors to the town, while the Corporation gave an annual contribution of £5 for their encouragement. They were generally followed by a ball each evening at the George, and the cards for 1820 conclude with the following announcement:—"Cocking as usual," "Theatre open." In 1828 the Gold Cup was won by "Maria Darlington," a chesnut mare belonging to Mr. Fletcher. This event was celebrated by Miss Foote, the popular actress, afterwards the Countess of Harrington, singing the "Little Jockey" at the Walsall Theatre. The stand itself was built at the cost of £1,300 by a company, on land granted for the purpose by Lord Bradford. In 1823 the proprietors were 34 in number, each of whom possessed

a "subscribers' ticket," which entitled him to free admission and other privileges. Some of these tickets or tokens are still left. They are the size of a five shilling piece, and are embossed with a view of the stand having the town and church in the back ground. The lower room contained a billiard table, which was supported by annual subscriptions. A good view of the stand taken in 1813 is given in Pearce's History of the town, and enables one to form a good idea of its rural appearance at that time. In 1879 the stand was sold for £72 and taken down, the bell and turret being preserved as relics. The racecourse itself belonged to the lord of the manor, but by right of ancient custom the freeholders of the parish claimed the privilege of pasture from Lammas Day to Candlemas every year. In all probability this was one of the "liberties" granted by Sir William Ruffus in the time of Edward III., about 1200.

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1811-1813.

In 1811 the number of burglaries rendered it necessary to establish a public patrol for the protection of common property, which had become endangered to an alarming extent. The parish was divided into six districts, in each of which a watch-house was provided, while the expenses were defrayed out of the poor rate. Each burgess was bound to keep watch in his turn or to find an efficient substitute. The various members assembled together at 10.30 at the Guildhall, and thence proceeded to their respective districts. They were empowered to arrest and detain until morning any stranger or suspicious person, and if any suspicion attached to him to deliver him to the sheriff, in whose hands he remained until acquitted. If he escaped, a hue and cry was to be made by the town and other towns near until he was taken. If a watchman happened to be killed in the execution of his duty, his executors were entitled to a reward of £40.

Pearce, p. 186.

In 1813 appeared a "History and Directory of Walsall, containing its antiquities and a modern

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survey of its improvements," &c., by Thomas Pearce, who was constable of the borough. The book is interesting from the number of old Walsall names contained in it. It gives a history of the town copied from that of Shaw, an account of its local and commercial advantages, a copy of the Corporation charter, a directory, and several valuable documents relating to local manners and customs.

About this time improvements were commenced on The Bridge which have one by one led to a complete transformation of its olden appearance. The brook course was then entirely exposed, shallow, wide, and liable to sudden floods. It entirely divided Digbeth from Park Street, both of these thoroughfares sloping down to the level of the water, while each roadway was considerably lower than at present, and the houses on either side were approached by flights of steps. About 1851 both Park Street and Digbeth were elevated to their present level, and the doorways of several of the houses were left considerably below the footway. This was particularly the case at the Town End Bank, where only a few years ago houses might have been seen with the chamber windows on a level with the causeway. The brook itself was crossed only by a foot-bridge, and in flood time ladies were carried across on horseback for the fare of one penny, ponies being kept for this purpose at the New Inn.

The first step in the march of improvement was the removal of the old corn mill, which stood where the "Observer Buildings" now stand. It had been for several years occupied as a blacksmith's shop by a person named Chadwick. The old materials sold for the sum of £31. The mill was the property of the lord of the manor, and the Corporation still pay the sum of two shillings per annum by way of acknowledgment of his claim. In front of the mill was a watering place for horses, while the site of the present Bank was used as a rubbish heap. The mill-race itself was partly covered over at this time, but it was not until 1851 that the remaining portion was finally built

over and the square enlarged to its present dimensions. Between the New Inn and the brook was a celebrated cock-pit, which is a prominent object in Pearce's plate, and which is described by him as "very spacious and much used during the races as a popular place of resort." A plan of High Street in 1817, with its various residents, may be seen in the Free Library. It was drawn by Mr. Mason. In olden times this part went by the name of the "High Town," the present George Street was called "New Row," while Dudley Street rejoiced in the name of "Hole End Street." Other almost forgotten names may be also noticed here. Birmingham Street was known as Hateley's Lane; King Street, as far as the bottom of Hill Street, was called Haines' Lane; New Street, Newgate Street; Temple Street, Crooked Alley; and the old Ware Well at the bottom of Ablewell Street survives in the modern form of Warewell Street. Digbeth still preserves its ancient name, and various conjectures have been made as to the origin of the word, one of which is stated to be from the A.S. *dic*, a dyke, and *pœth*, a path. That the term had some connection with the brook course at this point is most likely, but it seems more probable to suppose that it bore some relation to an artificial slope towards the ford, rather than a causeway or embankment. Another familiar example is met with in Birmingham. The name Digbeth is rarely, if ever, met with in old records, and must originally have been restricted to a space much more limited than at present.

GEN:  
Hist  
1813.  
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In 1815 and the following year the distress throughout the country was widespread, and the "Corn Bill" was introduced for the purpose of relieving it. We find traces of the local trouble in the following extract:

"November 6. The town of Walsall was thrown into confusion on Tuesday night by a numerous assembly of persons, by whom the windows of several bakers were broken, and who eventually attacked the new mill near that place. They did not succeed in getting into the mill, but they either destroyed or carried away everything they could find in the adjoining dwelling house."

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HISTORY.  
1819-1824.  
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From an old paper dated August 18th, 1819, we learn that at Warwick Assizes Mr. Cotterell, mercer, of Walsall, obtained a verdict, with £300 damages, against the proprietors of the "Retaliator" coach, running between Wolverhampton and London, for injury sustained while on his way to town by that conveyance. The plaintiff was alarmed by the horses running away, leaped off the coach, and fractured a leg.

In 1820 the trade of the town was in a most depressed condition, and the public feeling called forth the following petition :

"To Charles Windle, Esq., Mayor of the Borough and Foreign of Walsall.—Sir, We, the undersigned, do hereby request you to call a meeting as soon as possible of the Merchants, Factors, Manufacturers, and other Inhabitants of the Borough and Foreign of Walsall, to take into consideration the very depressed and impoverished state of the said parishes, and to draw up a petition to the Commons House of Parliament thereupon, and to adopt such other measures as may seem proper, right, and legal."

Appended to this are the names of a number of leading burgesses, and a meeting was in consequence held at the Guildhall to consider the question. Dated May 25th, 1820. The result of this meeting is evidenced by the following extract, which bears the date of the same year, viz., 1820: "A petition has been presented from Walsall setting forth the immense burden of the poor-rate, and imploring Parliament not to accede to any proposals for enhancing the price of agricultural produce."

In May, 1824, the first "Savings Bank" was opened in Walsall, under the patronage of the Earl of Bradford, the Earl of Dartmouth, and others. In less than a twelvemonth the deposits amounted to more than £7,000.

The pillars of the George Hotel demand a further notice. They were purchased in 1822 from the Marquis of Donegal, whose stately mansion at Fisherwick Park they had formerly adorned. The pillars may be seen in their original position in Shaw's old engraving of Fisherwick Hall as it stood in 1774.

In November, 1804, the estate was sold in London for the sum of £144,400, and the house was pulled down. It is said that the price paid for the pillars was less than the actual cost of conveyance, and the stone, from having lain in disuse for many years, was completely covered with moss. It may also be noted that the front entrance to the George was formerly from Digbeth. In 1826 the hotel was much enlarged and altered at considerable expense, and a note taken at the time records that "This inn, without any exception, ranks the first in the county, and reflects the highest credit on the proprietor, Mr. R. N. Fletcher."

GEN:  
Hist

Harwood  
"Lich"  
p. 506.

In 1826 the Blue Coat Schools on The Bridge Square were enlarged at the cost of £1,200, and a medal was struck off in commemoration of the event. In aid of this charity a sermon was preached on December 4th, at St. Matthew's Church, by the Rev. L. Booker, of Dudley. The church was so crowded that the gallery nearly gave way, and a great alarm was occasioned. It was found necessary to strengthen this structure by means of additional supports.

During the next few years a great development in church and chapel building took place. First may be noticed St. Paul's Chapel, built in 1826, at a cost of £3,000, by the governors of the Free Grammar School, who held the patronage until 1872. The chapel was consecrated by the Bishop of Lichfield and opened for public service on Walsall Wake Monday, September 26th, 1826. The chancel and vestry were not added until 1852.

Prior to this time the Roman Catholics of the neighbourhood went to a little chapel still used at Maryvale, or Old Oscott. In 1808 a chapel was built in Harden Lane, Bloxwich. In 1819 a room was taken at the Dragon Inn, and this was used until 1827, when the Catholics became sufficiently numerous to need a chapel for themselves. St. Mary's, The Mount, was therefore built, mainly through the exertions of the Rev. Father Martyn, who

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was appointed as first pastor. The cost of this chapel and the presbytery was nearly £7,500, and among those who contributed largely to the funds may be mentioned the Earl of Shrewsbury, Joseph Bagnall, of Spring Hill, and Mr. Joseph Cox. The Rev. Francis Martyn was an energetic and able man. He was educated at Sedgley School and Oscott, and in 1805 was sent to Bloxwich Mission, whence he was removed in 1827 to St. Mary's. Through his labours were built the Charity School at The Mount and the Catholic Chapel at West Bromwich. He was actively employed in the formation of the Midland Catholic Association, his name being among those of the speakers on this occasion. He died in July, 1838, and a tablet to his memory is preserved in the chapel, where his remains were buried in front of the altar. Father Martyn was the author of a volume of "Homilies on the Book of Tobias," "a classical work of its kind." He wrote also some letters addressed to "The Protestants of Walsall and its Vicinity," "for making them acquainted with the real doctrines of the Catholic Church." These afterwards expanded into "Lectures on the Eucharist," which appear to have been delivered in St. Mary's in Lent, 1827. They were replied to by a member of the British Reformation Society, the Rev. W. Dalton. Both of these works were published in Walsall.

The Unitarian, or Christ's Chapel, in Stafford Street, was also built in 1827, and its early history has been already noticed. The Baptist Chapel in Goodall Street, and Hall Lane Chapel were built in 1833. The Baptist congregation originally consisted of five individuals. In 1832 they were enabled, by the increase of their number, to form a Baptist Society.

Retracing our steps for a few years, we may just glance at some few of the social events of the time before entering upon the momentous period of the Reform Bill.

The first Post Office of which we have record

stood in the Bull's Head Yard in Rushall Street, and was "made free" in 1793. There was only one postman, who was blind. About the year 1800 the office was removed to The Bridge, adjoining Mr. Hobbins' house, which stood on the site now occupied by Mr. Robinson. Mr. Hill was postmaster, and Mr. Bullock was postman, at 7s. per week, with perquisites, viz., 1d. past the pinfold, 2d. over a mile. Mrs. Bullock was postmistress, and delivered in the Foreign. The post was received at 11 o'clock, and the rates for outward letters were—London 10d., Lichfield 5d., and Birmingham 4d. In 1827 the office was moved higher up Digbeth, with an entrance from Adams' Row. Here it remained until about 1853, when it was again moved to The Bridge, from thence into Park Street, again to The Bridge, and finally, in 1884, to the present large and commodious building. In 1813 the revenue for letters coming into the town was estimated at £2,000 per annum, and that from outgoing mails at about six times as much.

GE.  
HILL

PEARCE

A newspaper extract dated January 23rd, 1828, runs:—"Resurrectionists." "Several of these gentry have been lately prowling about in the neighbourhood of Lichfield, and last week they stole the body of an elderly female from Walsall Burial Ground." Again, "In 1830 the town of Walsall was visited by a storm of thunder and lightning, altogether more tremendous than any previous one in the memory of the oldest inhabitant. The streets and lower parts of the town were flooded."

WOLFE  
CHRIST

Ibid.

This same year was brought out a little local magazine, the object of which was "to promote the prosperity of the town." This was the "Walsall Note Book," edited by a Mr. Chavasse, of Digbeth. It lasted for twelve months, and contains some interesting information and a very fair attempt to illustrate the history of the town. The same gentleman afterwards published in 1838, a little pamphlet history of the "Borough of Walsall," which was brought out at the price of one shilling.

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1831.

Another public improvement was carried out in 1831, and is thus described: "On Monday morning the 2nd instant, the New Road, presented to the town of Walsall by the Earl of Bradford at a cost of at least £2,000, was opened for the first time, thus affording to the public a pleasant communication through Wednesbury and West Bromwich to Birmingham. Without any previous concert the working class of Walsall assembled to witness Mr. Quinton's Birmingham coach pass through, drawn by four beautiful horses, with new and splendid harness (manufactured in Walsall), headed by the Bloxwich band of music. About midway the coach stopped for the purpose of naming this May day gift 'Bradford Street,' in compliment to the noble donor; after which the assembled artizans shouted 'Long life and prosperity to the noble Earl of Bradford and family.' At the top of the road the coach again halted, the band playing 'God save the King,' and the air resounding with 'Long life and happy reign to King William IV.' The road (which runs from Park Street by the side of the racecourse) was planned by the Earl of Bradford's agent, Peter Potter, Esq., and finished by the celebrated Mr. Frost, Roadmaker." Lichfield Street, Goodall Street, Walhouse Street, and Freer Street, were also completed at this time.

On 8th September, 1831, took place the Coronation of William IV., amid many public rejoicings. Walsall manifested its loyalty by a procession consisting of the Corporation, the Odd Fellows, Druids, and other lodges, which marched to the Grand Stand, where the Mayor (John Heeley, Esq.) harangued the assembly on the King's Coronation. A few days later the school children of all denominations paraded the town, and afterwards had "wine and cake distributed to them on the racecourse." In December of this year there was great discontent among the colliers, and the military were kept in readiness in case of riots, which had occurred in various places in the neighbourhood. A number of special constables

MS. Notes to  
Pearce.

were appointed, and the signal for action was the ringing of the "little bell and the big bell" of St. Matthew's Church. Fortunately, however, their services were not required. c  
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The year 1832 was a memorable one in the history of our town, for in December of that year it returned Charles Smith Forster, Esq., as its first Member to the Reformed Parliament. During the agitation for Reform which had followed the formation of the Birmingham Political Union, in December, 1829, the people of Walsall had not remained passive spectators, but had taken an active part in strengthening the hands of the League, by holding numerous meetings, and by sending influential deputations to the monster gatherings in Birmingham.

In 1830 a meeting was held at the "Black Boy Inn," in Fieldgate, for the purpose of establishing a Political Union for Walsall, "similar in its constitution and its objects to the Unions which had been formed in other large towns, and Birmingham in particular, and which had taken for their watchword, 'Taxation without representation is tyranny.'" This meeting was largely attended, and a deputation from the Birmingham Union was present. "Never before," says a contemporary witness, "was such 'treason felony' spouted at Walsall. To hear the Iron Duke spoken of in the way he was, was something quite seditious, and the Walsall people were aghast." Mr. Cotterell made a vigorous speech in favour of the Duke, but was replied to so forcibly by one of the Birmingham orators, that he left the room. The meeting resulted in the formation of a "Political Union," and a number of influential members were enrolled, among them being the late Mr. Samuel Cox and Messrs. B. Abnett, J. Cotterell, William Cotterell, and others. Mr. Joseph Hicken, of Windmill Street, was appointed secretary. His labours were afterwards so greatly appreciated that he was appointed secretary of the National Anti-Corn Law League, an office which he discharged with the

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1831.  
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highest ability and honour. The Union continued to increase, and the meetings were held at the "Duke of Wellington," which was, however, by its enthusiastic landlord, changed to the "Earl Grey." Here was decided the purchase of the famous political flag. This flag is now almost unique, those belonging to the neighbouring Unions having been either lost or destroyed. The device on one side represents "Justice to the Oppressed, Freedom for the Million," with the British Lion couchant and Magna Charta, and the Bill of Rights in the foreground. On the other side, "Universal, Civil and Religious Liberty," and underneath, in large letters, "Walsall Political Union, established 1831."

Walsall Note  
Book, p. 137.

On January 19th, 1831, "a respectable meeting of the inhabitants of the Borough and Foreign of Walsall was held at the Town Hall, under the sanction of the Mayor (J. Heeley, Esq.), for the purpose of petitioning the Legislature that, in the event of any new distribution of the elective franchise, such privilege may be conferred upon the said Borough and Foreign." This resolution was moved by C. S. Forster, Esq., who, after dwelling on the need which existed for reform, thus stated the claims which he thought Walsall possessed for representation: "When I consider its population, amounting, according to the census of 1821, to upwards of 12,000 inhabitants, and at the present time probably falling little short of 15,000; when I consider its increasing wealth and intelligence, evidenced by the improvement of its streets and houses, the multiplicity of its public edifices, and the liberal, I may say eager patronage which is afforded to every religious, charitable, and literary institution ('it's true,'—and applause); when I consider the amount of business transacted here, and the much greater amount of business I hope we shall all live to see done amongst us; when, in addition, it has the claims of antiquity, being a borough of royal incorporation, and having, at some remote period probably sent Members to

Parliament, thus, assuming this fact, we are only asking for a restoration of that privilege which, by some accident, we have lost. When, I say, I consider these things, after the great towns of Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, and Sheffield, and coming to the second class of unrepresented towns, I think there are few with stronger claims than our own." The resolution was seconded by Mr. Cotterell, and being carried, it was moved that the petition should be presented to the House of Commons by E. J. Littleton, Esq., that Sir John Wrottesley should be requested to support it, and that the petition to the House of Lords should be presented by the Earl of Bradford.

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On the 1st March the Reform Bill was introduced to the House of Commons by Lord John Russell, and it was observed with much dissatisfaction that among the twenty-seven towns upon which it was proposed to confer Members, Walsall was not included.

Molesworth.  
"History of  
England,"  
v. i, p. 61.

On the 11th of March, in compliance with a numerously signed requisition, another meeting was convened by the Mayor, at the Guildhall, "for the purpose of petitioning both Houses of Parliament in favour of the measure of Reform introduced by Lord John Russell." The Mayor (J. Heeley, Esq.), after expressing his admiration and approbation of the measure, went on to say that some doubt had existed whether Walsall was included among the towns to which the privilege of returning a representative was intended to be given; but he was happy to have it in his power to satisfy the meeting that such would be the case. He had received a letter from Mr. Littleton, enclosing one from Lord John Russell, who stated that, "although in detailing his plan before the House he had inadvertently omitted Walsall in the list of towns to send one Member, it would certainly appear in the Schedule of the Bill." This statement evoked much applause. Several resolutions were unanimously carried, expressing the approval and "grateful satisfaction of

Walsall Note  
Book, p. 206



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the inhabitants of the town" at the course pursued by the Ministry.

Walsall Note  
Book, pp. 241,  
205.

The following month (April) the Reform Bill was thrown out, and Parliament dissolved. On the 10th May a meeting of the inhabitants of Walsall was convened by the council of the Political Union, at the "Black Boy," when "an address to His Most Gracious Majesty, thanking him for his wise and patriotic conduct in dissolving the late Parliament," was unanimously agreed to. The address was signed by 1,800 persons, and forwarded to Earl Grey for presentation. A few days later (16th) was a house-warming at the residence of Mr. George Forster, when the chair was filled by the Mayor, on whose right sat C. S. Forster, Esq., supported on the left by James Adams, Esq. After the banquet, the chairman, "by request of the company, solicited C. S. Forster, Esq., to stand forward as a candidate for the representation of the Borough and Foreign of Walsall in case the proposed Reform measure should pass into a law."

Molesworth, v. i,  
p. 217.

On June 14th, 1831, the new Parliament assembled, and on the 24th of this same month the Reform Bill was again introduced. October 3rd was the day fixed for the second reading in the House of Lords, and on the same day was held a great meeting of the Political Union in Birmingham to demonstrate to the House of Lords that the public enthusiasm in favour of the Reform Bill had not abated.

On March 19th, 1832, the Reform Bill was read a third time; but, fearing it would be lost during its passage through the House of Lords, another great gathering of the Union was summoned to meet at Newhall Hill on May 17th. Upwards of 200,000 persons were present, and the excitement in Birmingham and the neighbourhood was immense. The members of the Walsall Union met at five o'clock in the morning at the back of Mr. Hicken's house in Windmill Street. Numbering nearly 500 and

preceded by a brass band and the celebrated Union flag, they marched steadily to Handsworth. Here they were met by the Wolverhampton Union, and a lively debate took place as to precedence, the Walsall branch, however, finally taking the lead into Birmingham. Each member of the Council was provided with a hazel stick, and the story is yet fresh how Mr. Cox bound them all into a bundle, which was afterwards decorated by Mrs. Cox with ribbons and carried in the procession, as symbolical of its strength and unity. A public-house in Birmingham adopted the bundle as its sign, and retained it for many years; and it may be also noted that in a scarce print published at the time, and representing this great "gathering of the Union," a conspicuous position is occupied by the Walsall contingent and its historic flag. We find a local illustration of the Reform feeling at this time in the following: "May 23rd. On Friday evening last an effigy, intended to represent a noble duke, was carried through the streets at Walsall. In Stafford Street a man named Spencer, probably to show his detestation of the original, fired at the figure, as others had previously done in its progress; but his pistol being foul, instead of injuring the head of his supposed enemy, rebounded against his own, which was severely lacerated, &c. Mr. Spencer is likely to carry with him for the future a mark of his zeal in the cause of Reform."

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Wolverhampton  
Chronicle.

On the 4th June the Reform Bill passed the House of Lords, and on the 7th it received the Royal assent, a result welcomed, as many yet remember, with the greatest enthusiasm throughout the kingdom.

The proposed borough was thus described in Schedule D of the Bill:

" WALSALL.

" Proposed contents—The Borough of Walsall, containing the town of Walsall with its neighbourhood.

Population	...	15,000	Qualifying tenements	..	800
Houses	...	3,000	Assessed taxes	...	...£1,730."

From a local note we learn that the police were

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first established in Walsall on the 6th July, 1832, "in consequence of the approaching election for a Member of Parliament." A Mr. West was appointed superintendent, an office which he resigned in December, 1834.

!but.

The 13th of December, 1832, was appointed as the day of election for Walsall, and was destined to be made memorable by the grave riots, confusion, and destruction of property which then took place. Mr. C. S. Forster, a gentleman of great integrity, good position, and having considerable local influence, was selected as the Tory candidate, and declared himself on June 12th. He was a well-known banker in the town, and the father of the present Sir Charles Forster. Mr. George de Bosco Attwood, son of the great Birmingham leader Thomas Attwood, was brought forward by the Political Unionists, of whom he was chairman. The announcement was made early in June from the balcony of Mr. Cotterell's house in High Street, and a few days afterwards Mr. Attwood made his public entry into the town, "amidst thousands of spectators and under escort of the Political Union, with flags," &c. Mr. Thomas Attwood came to Walsall the same evening, and addressed the populace on the advantages of the Reform Bill, being enthusiastically received. His son possessed the advantages of eloquence, coupled with ability, and was a great favourite with the crowd, but it soon became known that his chances were hopeless. For some time prior to the election great exertions were made by both parties, and Cobden and others spoke from the Dragon windows for many nights. Wednesday, the 12th December, was the day of nomination. Mr. C. S. Forster was proposed by Mr. R. Jesson and seconded by Mr. Richard James. Mr. Attwood was proposed by Mr. W. Marshall and seconded by Mr. Joseph Cotterell, draper, of High Street. Mr. Forster's headquarters were at the George Hotel, Mr. Attwood's at the Dragon, while a large wooden building like a circus was erected on The Bridge for the polling.

On the day preceding the election Mr. Thomas Attwood and Mr. Joshua Scholefield were chosen as the representatives for Birmingham. In the crowd which then assembled, and which was doubtless longing for more excitement than an unopposed election had afforded, was someone who called out, as the multitude was just dispersing, "Let us go to Walsall." The cry was at once taken up, and the Union Band, followed by carriages containing the leading members of the Birmingham Political Council, and a large multitude, numbering, according to the evidence of an eye-witness, over ten thousand people, many of whom carried flags and banners, marched through High Street, Bull Street, Snow Hill, Constitution Hill, and Great Hampton Street, to Handsworth Old Church, the new road from Hampstead to Birmingham not being as yet completed. When near to Walsall, the band struck up the "Union Hymn," and on entering the town, about 12 o'clock, they were welcomed by the Walsall Unionists as "the true exponents of political liberty." The procession passed up the High Street, and halted at the Dragon, where all the flags, banners, and paraphernalia were accommodated. The crowd distributed themselves about the town, for the purposes of rest and refreshment, while Thomas Attwood, Thomas Clutton Salt, George Edmund, and other leaders, spoke from the balcony of the hotel, exhorting all to be peaceable. At three o'clock the Birmingham Unionists met again, for the purpose of shewing to the friends of de Bosco Attwood the numbers of those favourable to Reform. Bills were exhibited in the tradesmen's windows, shewing to which candidate they were favourable. Where for de Bosco Attwood the band played and the crowd cheered, and where for Mr. Forster "groans terrible and deep were freely given." The hustings were filled with a body of young men and youths, who waved a handkerchief, supposed to be the colours of Mr. Forster, and dared the Birmingham men to haul

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down their flag, at the same time calling them "bull dogs," and using freely other terms of reproach. The latter, becoming irritated, charged the hustings, removed the flag, and put in its place the colours of Attwood, at the same time giving hearty cheers for the victory they had gained. The Walsall men soon returned to the charge, armed with sticks and other weapons, and a fierce struggle took place, which resulted in a victory for the friends of Mr. Forster, and the colours of Attwood were speedily pulled down. The Birmingham men were, however, determined not to be beaten, and having armed themselves with short sticks, cut from "the neighbouring hedgerows," they advanced in a compact body, and soon recovered possession of the hustings, from which the colours of de Bosco Attwood again floated in triumph. While these combats were taking place the Riot Act was read, and numerous special constables were sworn in by the authorities, who were beginning to fear serious consequences. Many of these "specials" being Tories, the Unionists adopted the plan of swearing in some hundreds of their own order, who were equipped with staves and badges, and paraded the town with all the semblance of authority.

The committee of Mr. Attwood, together with several of the council of the Birmingham Political Union, waited upon the committee of Mr. Forster at the George Hotel, and endeavoured to dissuade that gentleman from going to the poll. From the excitement of the moment came high words, the two committees finally came to blows, and the friends of Mr. Attwood were ultimately expelled from the hotel, with their faces bruised and clothes torn. The Birmingham crowd wild with passion at the insult to their townsmen, forced an entrance into the hotel, broke every window, took possession of the chairs, tables and other furniture, which they piled up in a heap on the Bridge and set on fire. The special constables now began to act and arrested several of

the ringleaders. They were assisted by the gentlemen of the Birmingham Union Council, who advised the crowd to desist, and in addition volunteered their services as special constables for the occasion. Meanwhile the authorities had sent for the military, and shortly after six o'clock two companies of the 33rd Foot made their appearance, and charging the hustings with fixed bayonets soon occupied them, and something like order was once more obtained. The prisoners had been placed in an open court near to the Green Dragon, and they soon became very clamorous for food. Their friends managed to get to speak to them by passing from the windows of the hotel on the roofs of the houses near, and could thus ascertain their wants. Bread and cheese and bladders filled with ale were lowered down to them from the house tops, and they soon became more quiet and orderly. The Birmingham Council now advised that all Birmingham men should leave Walsall peaceably and quietly. This advice was listened to, and the Birmingham Road soon became filled with a crowd of people anxious to regain their homes. The prisoners were liberated in batches of twenty every half hour, and at once left the town under the escort of the special constables. By ten o'clock not a Birmingham man was left in Walsall, and the town had become restored to complete quiet. When the Birmingham men reached home they found the greatest excitement prevailing. The coach from Stafford had passed through Walsall during the uproar, and had brought all kinds of rumours and reports. It was said that Walsall was in flames, that the soldiers had fired upon the people, that several were killed, and that the medical men were not sufficient to attend to the wounded, who were to be seen in all directions. Placards were distributed throughout Birmingham detailing "the awful slaughter which had taken place." The greatest anxiety was of course occasioned by these disquieting reports, which was not allayed until the early morning, when

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the last straggler had arrived. The only casualty which has been handed down is that of Thomas White, who was severely stabbed with a knife; eventually, however, he recovered.

Walsall  
Observer, 1885.

On the following day, December 13th, the election took place amid great excitement, for the mob had determined that if possible the Tories should not be allowed to vote. To preserve the peace a company of the 33rd Regiment was quartered in Upper Rushall Street, and a detachment of Scots Greys at the Pleck, while it was arranged in order to obviate the difficulty and elude the vigilance of the mob, that the Tory voters should be assembled in the yard of the George Hotel during the night, and for this purpose a hole was made in the wall of Bridge Street Chapel Yard through which each voter passed. The Rev. Wm. Allott, the then minister, brought himself into such unpopularity by this act of collusion, that he was shortly afterwards removed from the town. During the election an immense crowd occupied the Bridge, and a large bonfire was lighted. The excitement continued to increase, the windows of the George were broken, and the special constables and soldiers were unable to stem the rising storm. The ostler of the George offered to ride for the Scots Greys, and charged through the mob on horseback. The Greys soon arrived at a hard gallop down Bradford Street and put the mob to flight. Various incidents are related of this charge of the "Light Brigade;" thus "one powerful soldier as he rode along caught a rioter by the back of the neck, lifted him in front of him and carried him straight away to gaol." Another soldier "struck with such hearty good-will, that missing his man he cut a large piece out of a brick wall near the site of Mr. Kirby's shop." Nor did the Dragon altogether escape, for the mob under the direction of a Mr. Serdifiield, of Stafford, attacked it, and took as trophies several of the blue hats worn by Mr. Attwood's supporters. These we are told "they put on and fought their way back to the

George in triumph." The polling afterwards proceeded without interruption, and resulted in the return of Mr. Forster by a majority of 73 votes over his opponent. "The glorious 73" became a party word, and a coach afterwards ran from Birmingham to Walsall bearing this name. At the time of this election the population amounted to 15,066. The number of electors who were registered was 597 (another authority gives 611), and the number of those who polled was 535. The defeated candidate in his farewell address stated that "measures would be taken to declare the election null and void," owing to what he called "the unconstitutional interference of the military." Mr. Forster was, however, allowed to enjoy his victory without interruption.

In the Corporation accounts are numerous entries showing the expenses to which the town was subjected at this time, and also in 1835:

	£	s.	d.
Mr. Hall, late Mayor, for sundry expenses on journeys by the magistrates during election riots ... ..	12	2	6
Three quarters' rent for house used by soldiers ...	23	12	6
Paid Wm. Spurrier, solicitor, Birmingham, his bill for attendance as the Mayor's assessor at Walsall election in December last ... ..	22	10	0
December 14th, 1835. Paid R. M. Fletcher's bill for expenses incurred during the election in 1832 ... ..	12	2	3
December 14th, 1835. Paid Wm. London for horse hire to Birmingham to communicate with Colonel Thorne for the purpose of making arrangements for placing a military force in the neighbourhood of Walsall during the election in May, &c. ... ..	2	10	0

In 1835 a Mr. Whitwick issued an address to the burgesses in opposition to Mr. Forster, but he did not go to the poll, and Mr. Forster was again returned.

In the election of 1837, which was rendered consequent on the death of William IV., Francis Finch, Esq., of The Hollies, Great Barr, who was a



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banker in Bridge Street, contested the borough, and was returned by a majority of 20 votes over Mr. Forster. A petition was moved for, and under scrutiny this majority was diminished to 4 votes only. This election caused a great deal of excitement, and fears were entertained of an outbreak, but the proceedings passed over without disturbance. Mr. Finch was a Liberal, and represented the town until February, 1841, when he accepted the Chiltern Hundreds.

Just at this time the Corn Law agitation was at its height, and Walsall was selected as the scene of the first contest, in which the Corn Laws should be opposed by the Anti-Corn-Law League. The following letter, sent to the father of Mr. W. C. Owen, from a remote little town in Anglesea, shows with what eager interest this election was awaited throughout the country:

"January 30th, 1841. . . . As all the talk among the politicians in this place is about the Walsall election, M— G— desired me to write to you to say that he should consider it a particular favour if you would be so kind as to write to let him know the result of the contest immediately after the closing of the poll. We presume it will close in time to write the same evening, and he shall know the next morning how it will turn."

Captain Gladstone, a brother of the present great statesman, appeared as the Conservative candidate, and a Mr. J. B. Smith was sent down by the League, with most ample supplies of money. The town was actively prepared for the contest by visits from Mr. Bright, Mr. Cobden, and others; and a Mr. Ackland, a great lecturer for the League, gave lectures every day from the Dragon window in support of Mr. Smith. Captain John Nelson Gladstone and his brother, the late Premier, also addressed large crowds from the balcony of the George Hotel, as well as in the Assembly Room. A few days later the Hon. Mr. Littleton was brought forward as a Whig, under the patronage of the late Lord Hatherton. He was a politician of too mild a type for the electors of that day, and soon retired from the contest. The leaders of the League

Life and Times  
of Gladstone,  
p. 14.

then waited upon the present Sir Charles Forster, who, however, declined to stand on account of his youth. They then made choice of Mr. J. B. Smith, and for the next few weeks the leaders on either side, including Mr. Cobden and other notable politicians, made the greatest efforts by drilling and addressing their supporters, and so close was the contest that Captain Gladstone was returned by a majority of only about 20 votes. At this election the town was again in a state of great excitement, and disturbances were so imminent that the Yeomanry and a troop of the Scots Greys were held in readiness to maintain order. Mr. C. S. Forster nominated Captain Gladstone, and in the course of an eloquent speech said that he should like to see "all the horses in the world harnessed by Walsall saddlers; all soles of all the boots pierced by Bloxwich awls; all the boxes fastened by Walsall locks; and the world's dust swept by Walsall brushes." Captain Gladstone was destined, however, to occupy the seat for only a few weeks, for in June there was a dissolution of Parliament, and a general election in the following month. He again contested the seat, but in the absence abroad of Mr. Smith, was opposed by Mr. Robert Wellbeloved Scott, of Stourbridge, an advanced Liberal and a Free Trader. Mr. Scott was returned by a narrow majority (22 votes), and represented the borough until 1847. He built the Red House at Great Barr. Captain Gladstone afterwards became member for Devizes and then of Portarlington, and died in 1863. On his return home Mr. Smith was presented by his Walsall friends with a costly piece of plate, purchased by subscription, and presented at a grand ball and soirée, at which Mr. Scott, the new M.P., was present.

At the next election, in August, 1847, there were three candidates, Mr. Forster, the present member, who professed out and out Liberal principles; Mr. W. H. Cooke, afterwards Recorder for Oxford, a strong Tory; and the Hon. E. R. Littleton, the present Lord Hatherton, who belonged to the Whig party. The

GENERAL  
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Molesworth,  
v. ii, p. 62.

Life and Times  
of Gladstone,  
p. 15.

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popular feeling lay strong with Mr. Forster, but his principles were deemed as yet scarcely reliable, and after a close contest Mr. Littleton was returned by 289 votes to 282. Mr. W. H. Cooke polled only 124 votes.

Walsall Free  
Press.

In 1852 the present Sir Charles Forster was returned unopposed. The Hon. E. R. Littleton retired, and although a Mr. Marshall, a banker, who lived at Bescot Hall, had solicited and obtained the votes of many of the Tory party, and had, moreover, promised that, "if returned, he would marry one of the elector's daughters," he did not, owing it is said to his want of success, put in an appearance on the day of nomination.

Sir Charles Forster was an only son, and was born in 1815, educated at Oxford, and married, in 1840, Frances Catherine, a daughter of the late John Surtees, Esq., and a niece of Lord Chancellor Eldon. In 1874 his long and faithful services to the country were recognized by Mr. Gladstone, who conferred upon him a Baronetcy. During his long period of service, his seat has been contested on only two occasions, but on each he has been re-elected by large majorities. On the first of these elections, in 1859, he was opposed by Mr. Charles Bagnall, a son of Mr. Thomas Bagnall, of Great Barr, and brother to the late John Nock Bagnall, Esq., of Shenstone. He was a fluent speaker, of winning and agreeable manners. The question of the Franchise was the basis of his electoral address, promising therein to vote for a six pound rental qualification. Party feeling at this election ran very high, and the crowd became very violent, breaking windows, &c., to such an extent that Mr. Highway (in the absence of the Mayor) read the Riot Act, and a detachment of the Birmingham police, which was in readiness, charged the mob with their cutlasses, several people being severely wounded in consequence. Mr. Forster was eventually returned by a majority of 112. Mr. Bagnall afterwards became M.P. for Whitby, and

died about 1883. In 1865, and again in 1868, Mr. Charles Forster was returned without opposition.

The year 1874 was politically notable for the strong efforts put forth by the Conservative party. On January 24th the announcement of the dissolution of Parliament reached the town, creating much surprise. A Major Bell came forward in the Conservative cause rather late in the day, but was warmly supported by the Catholic body. Professor Moulton was also brought down by Mr. W. H. Duignan, but finding that his candidature would split up the Liberal party he at once declined a contest. Mr. Forster in his address said, "after twenty-two years of service I venture for the sixth time to offer myself for re-election, as an earnest and independent member of the Liberal party." He then alluded to the support he had invariably given to such measures as the Disestablishment of the Irish Church, the law of Landlord and Tenant in Ireland, the Abolition of Purchase in the Army, and the Ballot Act. His address referred also to the law affecting the Descent of Land, the Education Act, and the Borough and County Franchise. Major Bell announced himself as an independent Conservative, "not opposed to reasonable progress, but to all rash and ill-considered legislation, and the meddlesome and destructive policy of the Gladstone Ministry." The polling took place in February, and the town was in a great state of excitement. The Bridge was crowded with "roughs," some of whom were, it was said, imported from Birmingham and other neighbouring towns. The shops were closed, and both candidates were pelted with stones, cabbages, and oranges, several people being injured. In the evening it was found necessary to march the whole of the Police force, together with a strong contingent from Birmingham, on to the Bridge, where they soon succeeded in producing order. At the close of the poll a public meeting was held in the Temperance Hall, and the result was announced

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amid loud cheers; Mr. Forster 3,364, Major Bell 1,721, majority 1,643. The number of voters on the Register at this time was 8,682, of which 5,104 voted, and the expenses of the election to Major Bell amounted to £888 18s. 11d. The return of Mr. Forster was celebrated by a dinner at the Windmill Tavern. The honourable member then announced amid enthusiastic applause, that his public services had been recognized, and that Mr. Gladstone had made him the offer of a Baronetcy, "in acknowledgment of his general character and position, and of his long and valuable services in the House of Commons as an independent member of that body, and as one of its official organs."

In 1880 Sir Charles was returned unopposed. The incidents of the last contested election, in November, 1885, are still fresh in the memory, and need no detailed notice here. In July, 1886, Sir Charles Forster was again returned unopposed.

The following terse biography of Sir Charles Forster, which appeared in *Vanity Fair* on the occasion of his receiving his Baronetcy, is worth quoting :

"When the first Reform Bill was passed, there was found in Walsall a banker who, by force of wealth and respectability, had made the place his own. He was naturally returned as the first member of Parliament for the newly enfranchised borough, and in due time left it as an inheritance to his son Charles. Charles had been to Oxford, had been to the Bar, had married a Miss Surtees, was a Liberal, and an opponent of State grants for religious purposes. For all which he was elected twenty-two years ago to sit for Walsall and to legislate for Great Britain, and he has retained the seat from that time to this with no more than two contests during the whole period. He was not found to be a great orator or an overpowering leader of men; he spoke seldom and briefly, yet always so much to the point as to command attention, and in course of time to become godfather to a successful measure for abolishing forfeiture in cases of felony. Soon, however, he was found to have appointed himself an amateur Whip to the Liberal party. On all important occasions, as on most others, he was to be found in the Lobby with elaborate private forecasts of the coming division, backed by laborious individual study of the various doubtful voters. In this way it became to be known that he had a claim upon the party, and he was made Chairman of the Committee of Petitions. And when on the recent dissolution the Liberal organization was destroyed, it was to him that all men looked for the

performance of that all-important service to the State, which consists in sending out the party circulars. He was a well-appointed man too, he had succeeded to two fine estates, with much coal beneath them; he was wealthy, and had no scandals or adventures attached to his name. It was felt, therefore, that he was quite the kind of man to be promoted to the ranks of the nobility, and accordingly, in fulfilment of an universal desire to that effect, Mr. Gladstone offered to him and received his acceptance of the Baronetcy which is the usual forerunner of a Peerage. That Sir Charles will do honour to his 'bloody hand' is certain; that he will be of great support to his party is undoubted; that he may one day become a prominent leader of them is possible."

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From politics we must now turn back to the year 1832, which was memorable also in another and far sadder way. The Asiatic cholera, which had been raging throughout the length and breadth of the land, acquired at this time a firm and fatal hold in this district. In June it appeared in Tipton, and on August 4th at Bilston, where, in little over three weeks, 565 of the inhabitants were swept away. On one of the early days of this latter month it appeared in Walsall, conveyed, in the opinion of the medical men of the town, direct from Bilston by the water of the canal. In the "Life of Thomas Jackson," a resident in the town at this time and one of the sufferers, we have a graphic account of its ravages here. "The first victim that perished by it in Walsall was a man who lodged in a house on the bank of the canal terminus; he was well and dead in twenty-four hours. Another man working in a boat shared the same fate. The whole neighbourhood that stood within the breeze of wind from this part of the canal became immediately infected with the disease. . . . So terrifying was the number of deaths daily that no one cared to put them into their coffins, neither could bearers be obtained to carry the dead to be buried, so that a man was employed by the authorities to go round the neighbourhood from house to house twice a day to carry off each corpse as soon as possible." On July 17th, 1849, a second epidemic broke out, and no less than 137 persons perished, while in the surrounding district 2,683 died from the disease.

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Life of Jackson,  
p. 130.

The year 1832 was also marked by a general depression of trade, which affected to a severe extent this and the surrounding towns. From a contemporary writer we learn that "the trades of the town were so bad that masters were glad to give up rather than receive apprentices."

The following narrative shews the state of public feeling at this time. It is taken from some MS. notes in an old copy of Pearce's History, lately added to the Free Library:

"West, the policeman, and two or three others of the police, three Masons, and Allman, were engaged on Wednesday morning, the 25th of July, 1832, to take five iron stealers at Caldmore. They took them and kept them in custody all day, at the Town Hall; at 9 o'clock, Wood, the Magistrate, committed them to prison. The police then left the Hall (many people were assembled) and went as far as Digbeth, the populace groaning them, and surrounding them. The four Masons were then sent for, who liberated them. They then went down home, to the Royal Oak. About 10 o'clock a messenger came, saying the populace were stoning the police. The four Masons went down—there were a many people, but not refractory. The Mayor and Magistrate, with one of the officers of the soldiers, then came with many, say 20 constables (including the police and the four masons); one man was then already in custody. The populace were ordered to disperse. The Mayor (the report is) struck one man with his stick, and took him into custody, and resigned him into the hands of the Mason, who took him into the Royal Oak Parlour. Soon after, three more were taken (stones were now throwing) into custody, making five prisoners in all. After keeping them about an hour, the Mayor released them all but one, upon promise of better behaviour in future; the one was locked in prison for the night.

"Next day, Thursday, the 26th, the iron stealers were brought up before the Magistrates and discharged, the persons robbed of the iron refusing to prosecute. The Magistrates then ordered the prisoner taken at the Oak last night brought up. Mr. Cotterell, and Shutt, Attorney, came in to the Mayor's Parlour; and Mr. C., the lad's father, and another, gave bail for him to take his trial at the next Sessions for a breach of the peace. He was then liberated.

"Thursday evening the same rioting and throwing stones commenced at the Oak, where the police resided, about ten and eleven o'clock; four of the Masons were there assisting; the Mayor and Magistrate were there. Several persons were taken into custody, but upon their promising not to offend in future, they were forgiven, and about twelve o'clock all was again quiet..

"Friday, in the morning the Mayor, Wood, and West, went to Birmingham and bought two blunderbusses, a brace of pistols and some hand-cuffs, and three Wathenwen's rattles. In the afternoon another batch of constables was sworn in. In the evening about ten hundred of the

populace had assembled opposite the Oak. Masons were again sent for, and the Mayor and Magistrates. Throwing stones at the officers, and in at the house door, was again the order of the night; the Mayor this night read the "Riot Act" in front of the Oak, and an officer of the Militia being with him, ready to call his soldiers at the expiration of an hour. Several persons were taken prisoners, and four were committed to the gaol for the night; two were the next day bailed out, other two remain. By the expiration of the hour after the Riot Act was read the populace all dispersed, and then all was quiet for the night.

GE:  
H  
H

"Next day, Saturday, being the second day of Stafford Assizes, Cotterell, the churchwarden, went to the Assizes, taking with him several persons who had been taken into custody. Among them was the man Harrison, who was said to have been struck by the Mayor. This same day the Mayor had information that, in all probability, there would be at night another collision of the populace and police. The Mayor then issued circulars cautioning the public in consequence of the preceding riots, to keep their servants, apprentices, and children within their respective houses in the evening. And sixty or more special constables, the Masons and police, attended at the Town Hall, at ten o'clock at night, prepared to issue forth and endeavour to quell any disturbance of the public peace. While the constables and Magistrates were so assembled in the Town Hall and Mayor's Parlour, there was some small parties assembled on the opposite side of the street, and abusive in their language. Between eleven and twelve o'clock some few large stones were thrown at the Town Hall; several entered through the door. The constabulary force was then divided into three divisions of about twenty-four each. Two of them were to go out and parade the streets, and the one was to remain as a guard at the Hall. On going out they persuaded the small parties of the populace to go quietly to their respective homes. Some took their advice, others were refractory. During this, a very large stone came through the Mayor's Parlour window. The Mayor then went out and read the Riot Act, and the party of constables at the Hall went out and quite cleared the street. One of the first parties that went out now returned, and said, as they passed the top of Rushall Street a stone was thrown at them, which had killed a butcher's dog (Meeson's), but it turned out after that the dog was not quite dead, bringing with them a man who was encouraging the mob. The town becoming quiet about two o'clock on the Sunday morning, the constables were dismissed by the Mayor, Mr. Wood, and Mr. Heeley, Magistrates, but without giving them any refreshment or even thanking them for their services.

"Sunday, all was quiet.

"Monday, a man was bound over to keep the peace. He had threatened on the day before, in the street, one of the policemen, named Bennett.

"Tuesday, there was no Magistrates' meeting this evening, as had been customary beyond the memory of man. At night there was a great many people in the streets, but all was quiet.

"Wednesday. This morning, at ten o'clock, the usual Tuesday evening or weekly meeting of the Magistrates took place for the first time."



GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1832-1833.  
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A newspaper of this year says, "The Walsall Theatrical Company under the management of Mr. C. Thornhill, terminated their season in that town last week. The audience that attended the Theatre at Walsall, frequently bestowed upon this company the merited meed of applause."

A few local tokens issued during the early part of the present century are still occasionally met with. Of these we may notice the following :

1. O. A bear sejant supporting a staff ragutée. "Payable by Fletcher and Sharratt."  
R. A wreath of oak branches. "Walsall Token, One Penny." Date 1811.  
Messrs. Fletcher and Sharratt were the proprietors of the "George."
2. O. View of the Old Church from High Street. "Payable by Fletcher and Sharratt."  
R. A wreath of oak branches; but from a different die to the preceding one. Date 1811.
3. O. Bust of a Druid with flowing beard and wearing a cowl. "Payable by Joseph Parker."  
R. Within a wreath of oak branches the inscription "Walsall Token, One Penny." Date 1811.  
Joseph Parker, the issuer, was a locksmith in Walsall.
4. O. A bear sejant supporting a staff ragutée. "Payable by Fletcher and Sharratt."  
R. A wreath of oak branches, and the inscription "Walsall Halfpenny Token." Date 1811.

All these tokens have two varieties differing slightly in their details. Nos. 1, 2, and 4 were designed by Turnpenny, of Birmingham; No. 3 by Peter Wyon of the same town.

A good plan of the town in 1832, delineated by Mason, may be seen in the Free Library.

The following year 1833, was rendered notable from an incident which happened to the present Earl of Derby. His father often stayed at the George on his journeys to and from London, usually remaining the night and taking up the whole of the house with his servants. In the autumn of 1833 he was passing through with his family, and the present Earl, then only seven years of age, was taken suddenly ill, and was obliged to remain there for several weeks.

Dr. Hamblin, then a local medical man, was called in, and from the interest and success with which he treated his patient, he was offered subsequently by Lord Derby an appointment as governor of the Falkland Islands, a post which he readily accepted. The Earl and his family were by no means unmindful of the kindness and attention they received on this occasion from their host and hostess, and Miss Fletcher became the recipient of several souvenirs left personally by the Duke of Richmond at the George. Of this same Dr. Hamblin it is recorded, that he one evening quarrelled with Mr. W. Cotterill, a local solicitor, and the result was that a meeting was arranged for the following morning at Ryecroft. The opponents armed with pistols met at five o'clock, but were interrupted and apprehended by the police. They were subsequently brought before the magistrates, and bound over in heavy sureties to keep the peace.

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1833-1834.  
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Another incident of the time was an accident which happened to the "Albion" coach. In the winter of 1834, whilst conveying a gang of convicts on their way to Portland, the horses took fright near Pratt's Bridge, and dashed at headlong speed into Walsall. In Park Street they came into collision with the carriage of Mr. Perks, the sheriff's officer. The coach was overturned, the coachman mortally wounded, and Mr. Illidge, the Deputy-Governor of Chester Gaol, was killed. In the confusion which ensued, the convicts were supplied by some friendly hands among the crowd with several files, with which they liberated their fetters, and about 4 a.m., when they had reached a solitary spot on their way called Dunsmore Heath, they sprang upon their guards, overpowered them, set free the horses, and themselves dispersed in several directions. Two managed to elude their pursuers, but the rest were recaptured, and the affair led to other and safer means being employed for the conveyance of criminals from one point to another.

W. H. Duignan.

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1834-1839.  
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This same year (1834) was marked by the establishment of the Walsall Horticultural Society, by the exertions of Dr. Kent and Mr. C. F. Darwall. It prospered for three years, and was then allowed to be quietly dissolved. The present society was commenced in 1880, and has done much good by the cultivation of a taste for flowers among the poorer classes.

Bradshaw,  
1839.

On July 4th, 1837, the Grand Junction Railway was formally opened, with a small station at Bescot Bridge for the convenience of the Walsall people, who were conveyed to and from the George Hotel in a small omnibus, or, as it was advertised at the time, "A light van runs from Bescott Bridge to Walsall for the conveyance of passengers." From this station there were two trains daily each way, and the fares to Birmingham were 2s. and 1s. 6d. for first and second class.

In 1846 the South Staffordshire Railway was incorporated, one object of which was to make a direct line of railway from Dudley, through Bescot and Walsall, to Rushall,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles in length. This brought Walsall into the direct current of the railway system, and was the origin of the large group of lines which now radiate from this centre, and which have contributed so much to its commercial interests.

The year 1839 gave birth to the "Walsall Mechanics' Institute," which numbered about 100 members, under the presidency of Richard James, Esq. It existed only for two years, by which time the subscribers had diminished to 35 and a considerable debt had been incurred. Although founded and carried on with the most laudable objects, viz., "the improvement of the working classes in moral character and mechanical skill," the society yet met with the prejudice and opposition of many of the leading employers of labour in the town, and this, conjoined with the want of support shewn by those for whose benefit it was established, caused its dissolution in November, 1841.

The "Agreement for the Commutation of Tithes in the parish of Walsall," in 1843, is in the possession of Messrs. Marlow and Potter, and is valuable from the large number of common, field, and place names which it contains. The tithe map of the same date is also very useful for reference.

GE:  
H1:  
1844

Two events of this time claim notice. One was the erection of St. Peter's Church in 1844, and the other the sad death of Mr. Harvey, the then Mayor, who was, it is supposed accidentally, drowned in Hatherton Lake.

The years 1852 and 1853 were notable for the changes which were then made on the Church Hill. The old and dilapidated houses with which it was then crowded were removed, the old Free School and the Market House, built in 1809, were taken down, and thus the view of the church itself opened out, while the narrow passage by which pedestrians reached the top of what was called the "Little Hill" was widened and made into the present steep ascent. St. Matthew's Schools were erected at this time, and three years later other schools were opened at the Birchills and the Pleck.

The Newspaper Press made its first appearance in Walsall about 1853. The *Walsall Courier* had an office in New Street, near the "Jolly Bacchus." The *Walsall Miscellany* came out about the same time. These were followed by the *Walsall Free Press*, the *Walsall Herald*, the *Walsall Guardian* (edited by Glew), the *Walsall Standard* (edited by Coleman Ivens), and the *Walsall News*, which has developed into the *Walsall Observer*. Mr. Robinson, in 1857, issued the *Walsall Advertiser*.

At this time also were founded several of those societies which have proved such useful aids to the working and ratepaying classes of the town. Among these we may notice the Walsall Building Society, the Freehold Land Society, the Ratepayers' Protection Society, and the Walsall School of Design and Ornamental Art, established in 1854.

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1855-1860.  
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In 1855 an enquiry into the state of the charities of the town was held before Mr. Thomas Hare, a Government Inspector. The enquiry lasted five days, and was the result of a "Memorial" addressed two years before to the Charity Commissioners by the Board of Guardians. The proceedings are fully detailed by Glew in his history of the town.

In this same year (1855) appeared the first number of a little periodical called the *Walsall Monthly Magazine*. It was edited by Kingston Neale, Esq., who contributed to its pages a story called "Rushall Castle." It ran a short course of twelve months, and was then given up as a failure.

In 1857 a rupture occurred between the members of Bridge Street Chapel which resulted in the entire withdrawal of 60 communicants of that body, and the opening two years later of the Congregational Chapel in the Wednesbury Road.

The Pleck Church was consecrated on July 27th, 1858, the total cost of which was £3,200; and on October 26th of the same year, the Walsall Reservoir of the S.S. Waterworks was opened.

In April, 1859, the "Free Libraries Act" of Mr. W. Ewart was adopted here, and the nucleus of the present large Library was founded. Walsall was the third town in the kingdom to adopt this Act. At first the agitation in its favour was unsuccessful, but it rapidly won its way into public confidence. In South Staffordshire this good example was soon followed by Lichfield, Wolverhampton, Willenhall, and Bilston. The Library is supported by a penny rate and by voluntary subscriptions, and contains about 12,300 vols.

The old custom of throwing apples and nuts from the windows of the Guildhall on St. Clement's Day was abolished in 1860. Up to this time the boys of the Grammar School were admitted to the Sessions Court, where they scrambled for apples thrown from the magisterial bench by the ladies and gentlemen assembled there, while outside in addition

to the fruit, the crowd were amused with hot coppers scattered amongst them by Griffin the Town Crier. In the Corporation Accounts are preserved numerous entries for apples, &c., on "Clement's Account," varying from £1 to £3. The origin of this custom is lost, but it is identified probably with the early history of the Corporation. One of the chapels in St. Matthew's was called St. Clement's, and by the old "Code of Laws" made about 1440, the "Maior and his bredren" were directed to make up their accompts on that day; while the ecclesiastical authorities were to render theirs on St. Catherine's Day. Until a recent period the day bore the name of "Clement's Accompt."

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1863.  
—

The year 1863 may well be called a golden one in the history of the town, for it witnessed the foundation of the Cottage Hospital, one of the earliest buildings of its kind, and an institution most praiseworthy in its beneficent work, and one indelibly associated with the life and labours of Sister Dora. So early as the year 1859 the subject had been discussed at a tea meeting promoted for the purpose of aiding the funds of the Birmingham Hospital. At this meeting a letter was read from the Secretary of that institution, intimating that the hospital authorities would thank the people of Walsall to send more money and fewer patients. Mr. Samuel Welsh, who was present, resented this as an imputation upon the people of Walsall, and advocated the establishment of a "Cottage Hospital" on the principal of the one—the first in the kingdom—then recently opened at Middlesborough. This suggestion bore no fruit at the time, but on June 14th, 1863, a preliminary meeting was called by the then Mayor, Mr. S. Cox, for the purpose of providing a small Hospital in which cases of accident could be taken and treated with proper care, and at the same time receive the benefits of skilful nursing. A provisional committee was appointed, which was aided by the advice of the Rev. J. Postlethwaite, of Middlesborough. Premises

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1863.  
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in Bridge Street were taken, and on October 12th, 1863, the Hospital was opened by the Bishop of Lichfield. At first it contained only eight beds, but these were shortly augmented to twelve. The nursing was undertaken by sisters of the Institution of the Good Samaritan, of Coatham, near Middlesborough. They were ladies of education and refinement, who had devoted their lives to the cause of the sick, and their services were entirely voluntary. On January 8th, 1865, Sister Dora came to Walsall, and undertook the superintendence of the Hospital during the temporary absence of Sister Mary, who was obliged to leave on account of ill health. After a short sojourn here of two months, Sister Dora was recalled to Middlesborough. In November of this year she returned again to Walsall, and at the urgent request of the Committee consented to remain permanently. Her life and work during the thirteen years in which she laboured amidst the sick and suffering here, have been told by her biographer, Miss Lonsdale.

Returning to the Hospital we find that in the first two years the number of cases amounted to nearly 2,000, of which 289 were in-patients. By this time the work of the Institution had outgrown all the available space in Bridge Street, and the committee after some trouble were able to secure a new site at the Mount, at a cost of £2,000. On April 13th, 1868, the memorial stone of a new Hospital was laid by the Countess of Bradford, and £1,150 were spent in enlarging and adapting the building which stood upon it. In 1875 a terrible explosion at the Green Lane Furnaces, by which 17 men were seriously and many of them fatally hurt, aroused the public to the need of a larger and more suitable building. Funds were forthcoming, and the present extensive and admirable Hospital was opened in 1878. A full description of the building itself is given in the Walsall Red Book for 1877.

In 1875 a severe epidemic of small-pox broke out in the town, and Sister Dora at once took the

entire charge of the Small-pox Hospital in Deadman's Lane (built at a cost of £2,000, and opened in July, 1872), where she remained in constant attendance for five months. In 1878 while the new Hospital was in progress she went with her patients into Bridgeman Street, but here an outbreak of "hospital fever" compelled the entire closure of the building. Her health now suddenly gave way, symptoms of a grave character came on, and after a trying and painful illness she died in Walsall on December 24th, 1878. A few days later her remains were buried in the Cemetery in the presence of an immense and sorrowful multitude of all ranks and classes. Her fame great as it was soon became world wide, and the volume written by Miss Lonsdale speedily passed through sixteen editions. The character of Sister Dora has given rise to much conflict of opinion, but by those who knew her most intimately, she will ever be regarded as a noble and high minded woman, as a Christian both in principle and in practice, and a most patient, skilful, and devoted nurse. She possessed to a remarkable extent that rare quality of inspiring trust and confidence, in addition to which she was a thorough disciplinarian, a woman born to command and yet to pity. The devotion of Sister Dora sank deeply into the hearts of the people of Walsall. Her portrait painted by Munns was hung in the Board Room of the Hospital, a richly stained east window was placed in St. Matthew's Church in 1879, a "Sister Dora Convalescent Home" was established at Milford, and finally a noble life size statue by Williamson, was unveiled on The Bridge on October 11th, 1886, by Benjamin Beebee, Esq., J.P.

Col  
Hos  
1878

In 1863 the Philharmonic Society was formed "for the cultivation and practice of the best concerted music," a work which it has carried out in a very successful manner by performing many of the masterpieces of choral music. In 1880 this society amalgamated with another having a similar object,



GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1863-1873.

and the two are now known as the "Philharmonic Union."

An improvement of public importance marking the year 1863 was the building of the present Guildhall, the foundation stone of which was laid with Masonic honours.

In 1866 the trade of the town was very bad, the orders from Australia and New Zealand having fallen off to a serious extent, and much suffering among the poorer classes was the result. The saddle and harness trades were those most seriously affected. On September 19th of the same year, the inaugural meeting of the Walsall Branch of the Reform League was held at the Guildhall.

In April, 1867, an agitator named Murphy visited the town and gave four lectures to crowded audiences in the Temperance Hall. This visit gave rise to a great deal of popular excitement. Special constables were sworn in, and troops brought over from Birmingham, while the Catholic body used every effort to keep their people from the meetings. On Sunday, April 7th, Murphy was attacked in the street and thrown down; he fought, however, with great courage, and ultimately succeeded in gaining the hall.

In November of the following year (1868) a slight shock of earthquake was felt throughout the town, the neighbouring towns being more severely shaken.

In 1869 some rather startling statistics were issued by the Temperance Committee, of which the following are the more notable:

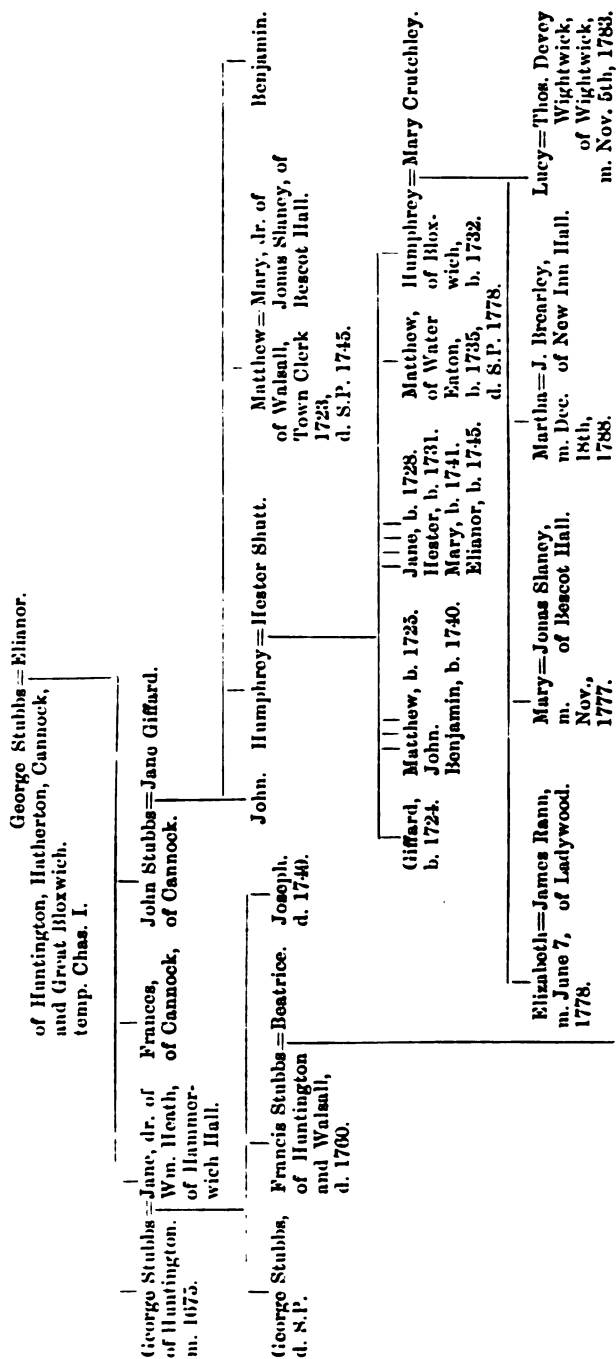
				£	s.	d.
For Relief of Poor	...	...	...	12,000	0	0
For Police Force	...	..	...	2,200	0	0

In Walsall at this date were nearly 325 public-houses, and the annual expenditure in strong drink was estimated at £169,000.

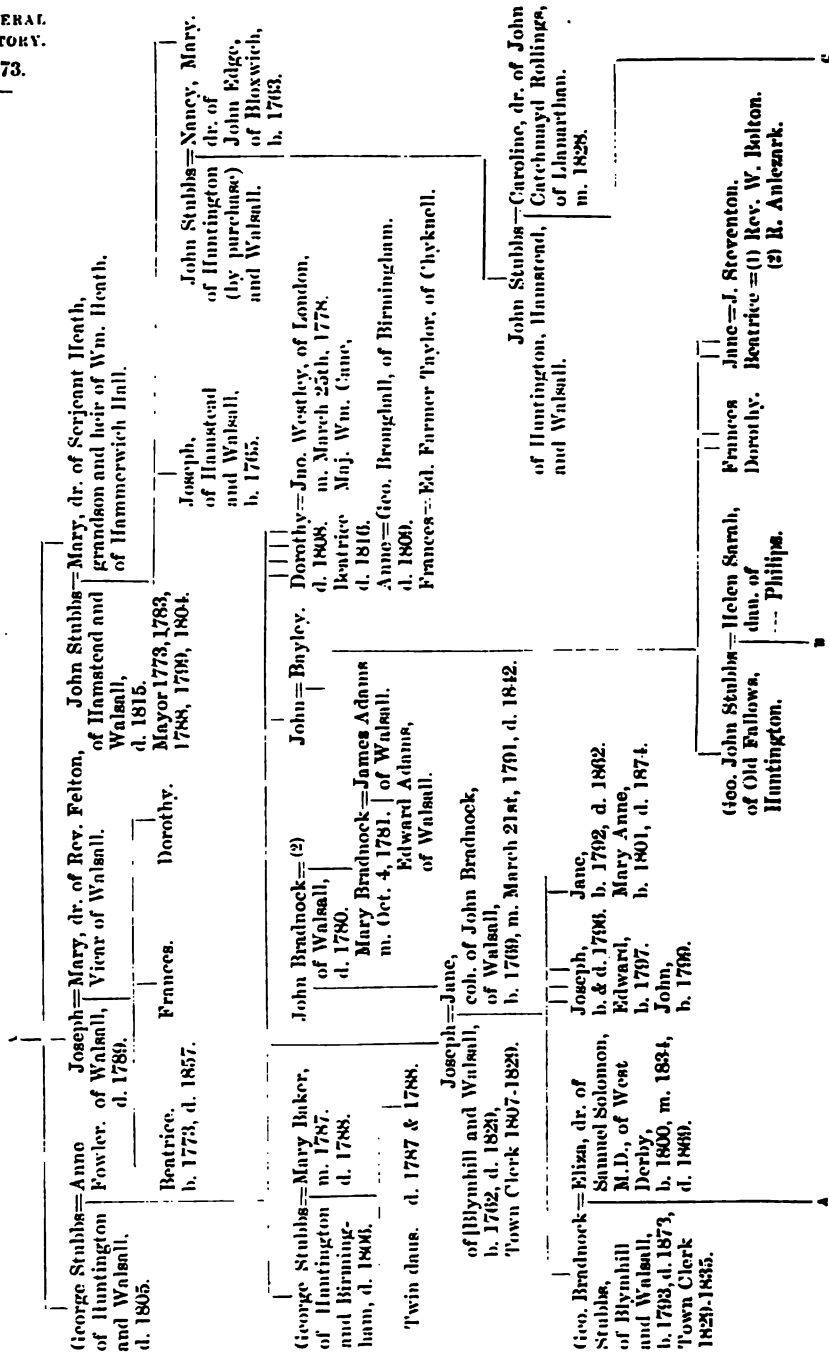
The year 1873 was marked by the death of George Bradnock Stubbs, Esq., an old resident in the town and the representative of a large and influential local family. Through the kindness of Mr. H. J. Newbolt, I am enabled to give the annexed pedigree.

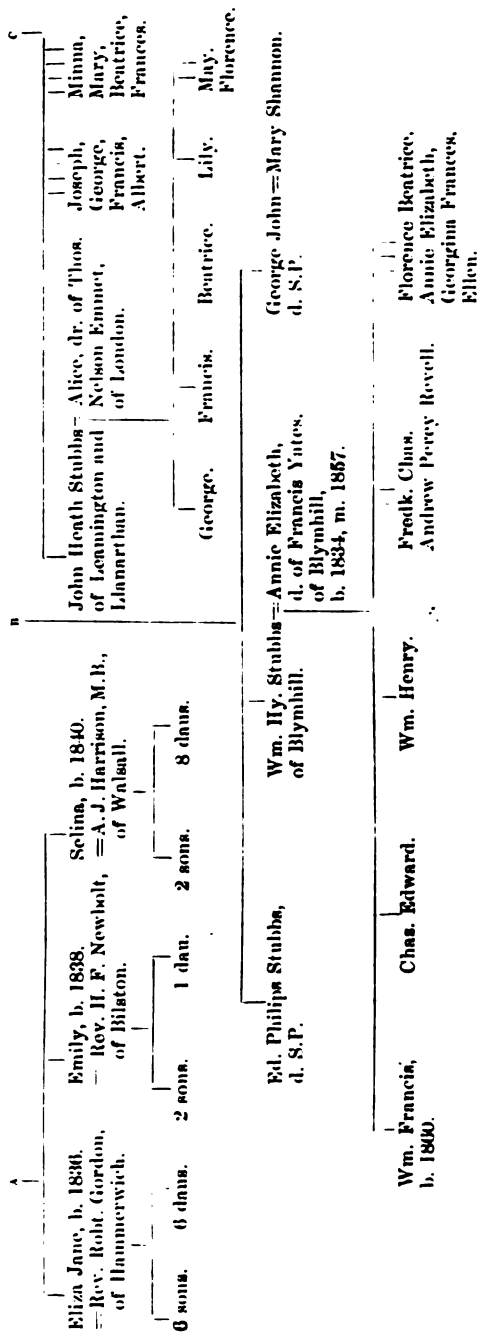
# PEDIGREE OF STUBBS OF WALSALE.

*Arms*—Sable, on a bend between two pheons argent 3 buckles of the first. *Crest*—A demi-eagle displayed or., in the beak a laurel branch, vert.



Gr: 18





GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1868-1870.  
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In the years 1868 and 1869 the town was visited by a widely spread epidemic of small-pox.

In the following paragraph, taken from the report of the Archidiaconal Conference held at Stafford in 1869, are given some particulars of the Church accommodation at that time :

"In the old parish of Walsall, with a population exceeding 45,000 there are five churches (exclusive of St. Paul's Chapel, which has no district attached), 1 mission room, and 9 clergy. In the district of Bloxwich, containing 9,000 people (excluding Blakenall, where there is a mission room, and where a church is now building), the church accommodates only 750, and there is not one free seat."

The old custom of "walking the fair" was abolished in 1870, and the year is also notable from the visit of the Staffordshire Agricultural Society, which was held on the racecourse.

The London Almanack for 1870 publishes the following under the heading of "Old Rhymes on Places:"

"Sutton for mutton, Tamworth for beef,  
Walsall for bandy legs, Birmingham for a thief."

In the death roll of public men for the year 1885 occurs the name of Sir Harry Parkes, British Minister to China. He was born at Birchills Hall, Walsall, in 1828, entered the Civil service in 1852, and was attached to the suite of Sir Henry Pottinger in China. After many years' active service as a diplomatist, he was created a Knight of the Grand Cross of the Order of SS. Michael and George in 1881, and in July, 1883, was appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Emperor of China, and Chief Superintendent of British Trade in China. He died in Pekin on March 22nd, 1885, and a bust to his memory has been lately unveiled in the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral.

Birchills Hall has now almost disappeared, but it was formerly a spacious and handsome building, surrounded by trees and approached by two carriage roads. The old materials were used for the erection of a row of small houses at Pratt's Bridge.

The events which have followed 1870 are still green in the memory, and need not be specially dwelt upon here. The principal which claim a permanent notice in the town history are: the formation of the School Board in 1871, and of the Arboretum in the same year; the building of St. George's Church, Trinity Chapel, and the new Baptist Chapel; the three terrible boiler explosions at the Birchills, the first of which resulted in the building of the new Hospital in 1868; the Gas Purchase and Borough Extension Act of 1876, and the Artizans' Dwellings Act of the same year, which latter swept away a large area of squalid buildings, peopled by a degraded and outcast race; the death of Sister Dora on Christmas Eve, 1878; the sale of the Lammas Lands and the demolition of the old Grand Stand in 1879. Lastly, we must chronicle the formation of the Walsall Literary Institute in 1885; the Jubilee opening of the splendid Almshouses on the Wednesbury Road, through the munificent liberality of Mr. Henry Boys; and also the laying of the foundation of a Science and Art Institute on the previous day, June 20th, 1887.

C  
L.  
1870

We have now surveyed the history of the town from the time when a single Saxon hall gave birth to its name, through long ages marked by a constant increase in size, prosperity and progress, until the present, when the homes of nearly 60,000 people can be seen from its hill summit, and beyond the parish boundary those vast Black Country towns with their teeming and ever increasing populations. It is not easy to foretell the future of Walsall, but the finger of progress points to a centre of commerce, whose scope and power of increase shall be almost unlimited; it points to canals which communicate with the chief seaports of the kingdom; to a railway system branching off in all directions, and affording perfect facilities for business purposes; it points to the vast ungotten wealth of Cannock Chase, and it points to new departments of industry, which have been of late years introduced; while the manner in which its

GENERAL  
HISTORY.  
1887.  
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trades have developed their present prosperous condition, and the fact that no town in Staffordshire has for the last quarter of a century been making such rapid strides onwards, go far to justify the belief that in time to come Walsall will attain a pre-eminence and distinction second to no other town in the county.

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## Appendix A.

The following is taken from a Survey of the Manor dated May 13th, 15 James I. (1617), in the possession of Lord Bradford:

*"The Meetes and Bounds of the Mannor of Walsall, limited and extending as followeth, vizt.,"*

"From James Bridge descendinge the river there alonge to Bescott Bridge and down along from the same Bridge descendinge the same River unto the Tame Shrubbes and so to the River of Tame and so alonge by the s<sup>d</sup> River of Tame untill it meeteth with ffulbrooke water including within this man<sup>r</sup> The Meadows there called Tame Shrubbes meadowe and Bloome Smythie Meadows sometyne the Inhitance of Walter Leveson and soe ascend<sup>s</sup> up and by the s<sup>d</sup> Brooke called ffulbrooke unto the way leadinge from Walsall toward Birmingham and soe alonge up the s<sup>d</sup> ffulbrooke till it cometh to Scott Brooke and soe alonge by the s<sup>d</sup> Scott Brooke unto ye further end of Wayne Hay and soe alonge the hedge of the s<sup>d</sup> Wayne hey to the over end of a close of Wm. Pyerson called Harriepars Crofte and thence into and over the Layne there called Barne Layne by the head of the Ground there called the High ffeild and Gillott in the Goraves and alonge by the side of a Crofte nowe or late Conywerthes abutinge upon a Layne there and thence alonge the s<sup>d</sup> Layne leadinge toward the hey head until it come to a Ditch over the s<sup>d</sup> Layne havinge therein a little wood bridge and to ye further end of Thorney Moore and soe alonge the hedge there compassinge the s<sup>d</sup> Thorney Moore unto the uper side of Soundehill and soe compassinge the s<sup>d</sup> Saundehill by the hedge untill it come to Botterell wood and soe alonge by the s<sup>d</sup> Botterell's wood unto Saundhill poole out of wch Poole issueth a Perl or Brooke wch discendeth thro' the nether end of Scott heys into Rushall Wood and so descending thro' the said Rushall Wood by all the length of Caldwell wood and soe descending alonge by Caldwell ffeild into a ffeild of Walsall called Walsall Holebrooke and soe descendinge alonge there betweene the two ffeilds there cull'd Holebrookes and between Hearick's ffeild and Dosegreaves and soe alonge by the upper side of the said Dosegreaves untill it come to a Crofte of Jno. Persehous there called Byrch Crofte and there the Mete and Bound of this lópp leaveth of from the s<sup>d</sup> Brooke or River taking his Name of Holbrook aforesaid and called by the



name of Holebrooke River and so bears that name untill it come to the greate River called Broade Water betweene Walsall ffeild and Wisemore and soe to return back to the said Birch Crofte the Mete or Boundary of this löpp in that place ascendeth from the <sup>s<sup>d</sup></sup> Holebrooke River up alonge the hedge of the <sup>s<sup>d</sup></sup> Birch Crofte between the <sup>s<sup>d</sup></sup> Birch Crofte and Dungeons unto ye Lane there leadinge from Yeoldbridge ford there toward Rushall and soe upp along the <sup>s<sup>d</sup></sup> Lane by the upp side of the Ground of the said Jno. Perschowse there called filks Crofte Bynd Crofte and Werrett ffeild unto ye ford there called Wombrooke ffordo soe over the <sup>s<sup>d</sup></sup> ford unto by the utter side of Ashby Meadowe the Hallow Meadowe betweene the said Meadowes and the old ffeild and soe along the utter side of the Lords Crofte there and soe alonge the upper side of Cancke Crofte by the holt ffeild and Conigrey and by the Lord heath unto ye Layne being the Post way toward Bloxwch att ye Ruck of Stones and soe from the said Ruck of Stones it entreth into a little Lane there leadinge out and from the said portway into a Close of the said Jno. Perschowse called Reynold Crofte and soe alonge between the said Reynold Crofte and the said Lord Heath unto a Crofte called the Lord Crofte in wch Croft there is a springe wch moveth a water called Persesitch which is another Boundary of this Lordpp and wch descendeth downe thro Harden Hayes and thro Poolen Rey and Raycroftehy to and into the Lane there leadinge from Ryecrofte toward Harden and from ye said Lane descendeth into pte of the pasture called Blakehey and from thence falleth downe into ye holmes and soe leavinge ye said Poole and the Holmes that goeth alonge by the utter side of the said Blakehey and by a meadow of Jno. Stone called Washbrook Meadow sometymes Coleman's being parcell of the copyhold land of this Manner and thence to ye Lane meetinge another Brooke there called Shelfeild Brooke and soe upp the said Shelfeild Brooke into and thro Spon Meadow and soe alonge to Shelfeild bridge and upp alonge from the said Bridge into a Lane leading from Shelfeild afores<sup>d</sup> to Stubbott Greene and soe ascending by a Perle there called Langley Brooke until it comes to King's Hayes and by other Ground there untill it comes to a double Ditch called Ditch Hill and thence into Duddingdale lyinge in the Vally being the Way leading unto Lynn Layne End and from thence by a path way leading over the heath by Cattlowe als Cattshill and soe by a little greene path way leading from ye said Cattshill unto Halter mare Lane End and thence to Cleyhongre and from thence by a Perl issuing out of Cleyhongre Well or Lake descending from thence to Shelfeild Poole and from thence ascending by another Perle called Clock mill perle thro Yeld Meadowe and upp by Pelsell and Gostcote Meadowes unto Clock mill afs<sup>d</sup> and from thence ascending the Perl or Brook by Nut<sup>..</sup> Meadowe unto a ffeild called the high Lee and so by the <sup>s<sup>d</sup></sup> Perl to and into a Lane leading from little Bloxwch towards little Wyrley and soe downe the <sup>s<sup>d</sup></sup> Lane into Butford Lane and so downe the same Lane untill it come to a Perl Brook descending into and thro ffishley and Brodhey and waterfall Mores and there meetinge with another Perle Brooke and therein ascending into and thro both the Obleys and soe along thence into Essington Wood and soe ascending

the same Perl by the nether end of Yeld feild into Stafford way and so up the Ditch from the s<sup>d</sup> Way along by Essington Wood side and so to a Lane called Midle Gullet Lane and thence by the said Wood unto a Lane End there called Clitchhinge Lane leadinge from Great Bloxweh toward Hilton and so along also by the said Wood compassinge the Barne Hale shooting downe unto a Perle in Thorney Moore runing down into Snead Brook and thence along to Snead Bridge and from the said Bridge descending the Brook there to Bentley Hey and soe along to Birchells and from thence to and into Walsall parke and thence descend<sup>s</sup> along the said Brook till it comes to Jas. Bridge af<sup>st</sup> where it began &c. "

NOTE—The Survey itself was taken on behalf of Sir Richard Wilbraham, by John Perschowse, gent., Steward for the Lord of the Manor. It contains a lengthy and minute description of all the holders of land within the parish, and the amounts paid by each, together with many names and localities long since forgotten. The park is described as "now disparked and in several divisions and closes divided containing by estimation 210 acres. In which same park the Manor house of the same park formerly stood, and the same park is worth yearly £79 1s. 6d." A later paragraph mentions "the old gates of Walsall Parke."

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## Appendix B.

The following table of expenses was published some years ago by a Mr. Hamilton, of the British Museum, and is taken from the old Churchwarden's Book, numbered 62 in the Calendar of Deeds. The original is difficult, in some places impossible to decipher correctly, but the account as it stands refers probably to the Chapel of St. Mary and to other alterations rather than to any expansion of the original building.

*EXTRACTS from MEMORANDUM of the expenses from the day of the Holy Innocents (Dec. 28) in the second year of Edward IV. (1462) of Richard Curtes and Thomas Flecchar Wardens of the Church of All Saints for the building of the said Church.*

Inprimis To John Nyztyngale	...	...	...	...	xls.
Item to John Nyztyngale and two men for one day's labour	...	...	...	...	xijd.
Item to John Skute & Barker for one day's labour	...	...	...	...	viijd.
Item for a gabull rop	...	...	...	...	xs. vjd.
Item to William Raynald for the labour of lyme put and koles...	...	...	...	...	xxiijs.
Item to Nicholas Dicons and Richard Crumpe to dyke stone for ix days	...	...	...	...	vs. xd.
Item to the caryars and laborars for bread and beer	...	...	...	...	xijd.
Item to Roger Greve for three days to breke stone	...	...	...	...	xijd.
Item to William Masyn for skapelyng and oder labur v days	...	...	...	...	ijs. vjd.
Item to Richard Quoke and William Smyth for ij loads stone	...	...	...	...	xxd.
Item to William Burgulor and Richard Shelfell for ij lodes	...	...	...	...	xxd.
Item to Peter Cowper for dystyng two trogges	...	...	...	...	ijd.
Item to John Wyot for eight days and a half	...	...	...	...	iijs. vjd.
Item to Thomas Quok & Henry Walter for 9 days and a half	...	...	...	...	vjs. iiijd.
Item sharpyng of pykes at Sutton	...	...	...	...	vjd.
Item to John Fysshar for a barell	...	...	...	...	ijd.
Item to Roger Myleward for labour at the lyme put and in the church	...	...	...	...	ixd. ob
Item to Richard Spen for labour	...	...	...	...	iiijd.
Item for an yron to the whele and oder yron gere and servias	...	...	...	...	ijjd.
Item to John Greygos for a square tree to the arche	...	...	...	...	iiijd.
Item for bord to the same of Alryche	...	...	...	...	iiijd.
Item to Robert Bons for a hinge	...	...	...	...	ijd.

Item to William Walter Junr. for labour at the quarry of Sutton	xjd.
Item in talow to the gabull ... ..	iiijd.
Item to Richard Shelfelle for 5 lodes stone ... ..	iijs. ijd.
Item in a mele ... ..	jd.
Item to Skot for ij lode stone ... ..	xxd.
Item in predyng the gabull and oder labour ... ..	vjd.
Item to William Smyth for ij lodes ... ..	xxd.
Item to Richard Merston for a carfull poll ... ..	vjd.
Item to Thomas Corvesar for the crane undersettyng the rof of Seynt Maryes and sawyng the sparres ... ..	xixd.
Item in rosyn ... ..	jd.
Item fallyng tymber ... ..	ijs. iiijd.
Item in iiij lokurs ... ..	ijd.
Item in cuttyng spar endes and ale ... ..	jd.
Item to Thomas Powle for labour and beer ... ..	iijd.
Item in hoppyng and yron gere ... ..	ijd.
Item to William Masyn for stondyng of the roof ... ..	xxd.
Item in a carfulle of wood ... ..	vjd.
Item to Roger Myllar for water ... ..	ijs.
Item in a borde to the plumber ... ..	iiijd.
Item to John Nytyngale .. ...	xls.

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## Appendix C.

### THE GUILD OF ST. JOHN.

In relation to the lands (see p. 183) belonging to the Guild of St. John, which were seized by the Crown in 1 Ed. VI. (1547), is a curious series of Depositions taken at Gray's Inn on 24th January, 1565 (8 Elizabeth), before John Byrche, Esq., "one of the barrons of the quenes maiesties Courte of thexchequier." Various witnesses from Walsall were examined and careful enquiries made as to their knowledge of "St. John's Gylde;" how many chauntreys belonged to it, and who were the priests of the same; what lands or tenements had been given for its maintenance, and by whom; who had received the profits and issues of the said lands, and whether any part of the same had been sold or concealed. Among the last questions is one relating to "lande called Mosleyes Doole belonging to a certen gilde in Walsall and whether have yowe bene at tholdinge of any Courte there as Maior of Walsall and to what use was the proffitts of the saide Courte turned unto. And whether any parte or parcell of the comodytie of the said landes was distributed emongist the towne Folkes of Walsall and how muche is the same that is every yere soe disbursed," and whether the said lande "be concealed."

John Dawson, who was Mayor in 1557, deposed that "he dothe knowe a hall in Walsall called Burges Hall and that there the Towne kepe their Gilde at suche tyme as there was any gylde kept there," that there were "eight or nyne Chaunteries belonginge to the saide Gylde and that Sir Willyam Rudware was Chauntery Priste of St. John's," &c.; that "the Mayor and his bretheren have soldo certeyne Landes to the valewe of fyve nobles by yere," but was uncertain as to the use which the said money had been put to; that "he knoweth the landes called Moseleyes Dole and the same landes was geven to the Towne of Walsall but whether yt was to thuse of any guyld or no this Deponent ys uncerteyne and that the profit of the Court held at Bascote was werthe any yere sixe pounde to the Mayor and Comynaltie of Walsall." From succeeding witnesses we gather other interesting facts relating to the chantries, their priests, the lands attached to them, and the disposal by the Corporation of certain parts of the same lands. We learn that "St. John's Hall wch they call the Townehal was concealed and parcell of the saide Gylde;" that "Sainte Clemente Landen and also two croftes called Sainte Kateryns lande" lay in "Abelerstreate,"

the profits of which lands were "ymployed either to the maintenance of lytes or of a priste in the wyntertyme before day to saye Masse in the church of All Saintes;" that "the Mayor and bretheren of Walsall have taken the issues and proffitts thereof eversins the Statute made for the puttinge downe of Chaunteries;" that "the same have solde dyvers lande that was chauntry lande for the whiche they did receave an hundred pounde and above as he hathe herde reported and as moche plate as dyd wey xx<sup>li</sup> of leide waites as he hathe herde credably reported And that the same land was parcell of the Gylde Lande whiche was concealed and the money whiche they dyd receave for the same the Maior and his bretheren dyd take to their owne use And that aboute xxviii yeres past the Maior and bretheren had and as he supposeth yett have as moche brass and pewter and other furniture of kichen stuffe that was used in the same Gilde Hall that wolde furnishe sevenscore messes of meate And there ys twoo greate Brasse potte belonginge to the same Hall called Saint Johns Hall And that when there ys any Marriage or Churchales they kepe the same in the same Hall And that they make orders thrt so longe as the churchale last the Victualers of the saide Towne shall not sell nor utter ther victualle there althoughe the saide church alea contynue by the space of a monethe together." The same witness also states that "he dothe knowe the landes called Moseleys dole lyinge in Bescott (Bascote) in Warwickshire very well and that the same was geven by one Moseley to the Towne of Walsall to be prayed for and that ones in the yere there ys a dirdge songe and the proffitte of the same landes given amongst parishioners of Walsall as well to the Riche as poore," &c.

*Vide Exchequer Queen's Remembrancer. Barons' Depositions, Hillary (8 Elizabeth, 1565). No. 61.*

## Corrections and Additions.

Page 6, line 7, for '3584' read '3055.'

.. 7, line 11. The Rev. Stebbing Shaw contributed a general view and account of Walsall to the *Gentleman's Magazine* for April, 1795.

.. 67, .. 24. The following Records relative to the Manor at this time are contained in the 'De Banco Rolls' of Ed. II., and are preserved in the Public Record Office :

10 Ed. II. John de Someray summoned to answer Ralph Bassett, of Drayton, concerning a moiety of the Manor of Walsall with appurts.

16 Ed. II. Proceedings between Lucy, widow of John de Someray, agst Ralph Bassett, of Drayton, concerning a third part of the Manor of Walsale.

16 Ed. II. Ralph Bassett, of Drayton, against John de Sutton and Margaret his wife, sister and heir of John de Someray, concerning a third part of the Manor of Walsale.

18 Ed. II. Ralph Bassett against John de Sutton and Margaret his wife, sister and one of the heirs of John de Someray, concerning a third part of a moiety of the Manor of Walsale.

18 Ed. II. Ralph Bassett, of Drayton, against John de Sutton and Margaret his wife, sister and one of the heirs of John de Someray, and Joan, widow of Thomas Bolecourte, sister and another heir of John de Someray, concerning a third part of the Manor of Walsale.

Pages 69--71. Ralph, last Lord Bassett. From a record discovered among two bundles of proofs of age in the White Tower of London, it would appear that Ralph, last Lord Bassett, was not a grandson of Ralph Bassett, who died in 17 Ed. III. The entry states, 'Ralph Bassett, of Drayton, cousin and heir of Ralph, born and baptized at Walshale November 30th (7th Ed. III.).'

Page 80, line 13. for 'Sir Roger Hillary' read 'the heirs of Sir Roger Hillary.'

In the Deputy Keeper's Reports, No. 9. Appendix 2, page 101, is a "grant to Richard Rugge, Esq., of an annuity of £10 out of the lordship of Walsall." Dated 7th July, 2 Rich. III. (1484.)

Page 112, heading, *for* 'Henry VIII' *read* 'Henry III.'

- .. 123, line 6. On the original roll of the License for the foundation of Mollesley's Chantry, the Parish Church of Walsall is called All Saints, and not St. Mary's.
- .. 128, line 13. A reference to the more exact copy of the 'Orleynance,' on page 263, will show that the 'drynkynges' relate to the craftsmen themselves, and not to the 'Maioir and his bredren.'
- .. 140, line 5 from the bottom, *for* '1492' *read* '1402.'
- .. 149. The view of the Old Church, described at page 140, is taken from the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1798.
- .. 182, last line but one. Richard Hopkins was not Mayor until two years after this time.
- .. 286. Descent of Bescot estate. Through the kindness of Mr. James Slater, I am enabled to give a more correct account of the different owners of this estate. In 1728 Elizabeth Slaney, widow, was the owner in fee simple, and she by her will devised it to Jonas Slaney. In 1781 the Rev. Jonas Slaney, who was the heir-at-law of the before-mentioned Jonas Slaney, conveyed the property to trustees upon trust for sale. In 1791 the trustees sold and conveyed to Richard Wilkes, who in 1794 parted with the same to Richmond Aston. In 1820 Richmond Aston's representatives conveyed the property to Edward, Stephen, and John Crowther, as tenants in common. John Crowther became ultimately the sole heir, and he by his will, dated March, 1852, devised the property to William Crowther, a relation. In October, 1871, the property was purchased by Richard Bagnall, Esq., and finally, in April, 1872, was bought by James Slater, Esq. All the owners of the property, with the exception of the Crowthers, appear to have resided at Bescot Hall.

Page 437, line 20. In 1886 three Almshouses for persons "in reduced circumstances and over 60 years old," were founded by John F. Crump, Esq., at a cost of £500 and an endowment of £500 "after the decease of the founder and his wife." Other Almshouses at Caldmore and Bullock's Row are due to the beneficent liberality of Mr. Edward Marsh and the late Mr. Samuel Cox.



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